





THE SATURDAY BOOK 1941-42 A NEW MISCELLANY

EDITED BY LEONARD RUSSELL

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THE SATURDAY BOOK / 1941-42

A NEW MISCELLANY

Edited by LEONARD RUSSELL with contributions by

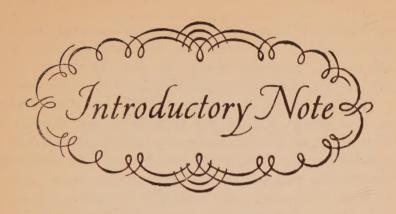
H. E. BATES NATHANIEL GUBBINS ERIC NEWTON PHILIP GUEDALLA DILYS POWELL 70HN HAYWARD HAROLD HOBSON GERARD HOPKINS IAIN LANG

H. J. MASSINGHAM V. S. PRITCHETT LEONARD RUSSELL JAMES STEPHENS OLGA VENN

Wood engravings by AGNES MILLER PARKER

HUTCHINSON

Published October, 1941 Reprinted October, 1941



N THE EARLIEST stages of this miscellany, when

it was but a sheet of paper and some pencilled notes, its intentions were less modest than 'Aim: a book, to be issued yearly, for all sections of the reading public.' All sections! Let me pass it by quickly as an observation that contains, as somebody remarked in another context, the wisdom of the dove and the harmlessness of the serpent. However, if you look hard at the wartime reading public though there is really no reason why you should, two main groups of readers are discoverable; and seeing that this is a bit of research, perhaps the appropriate terms for them are the neoterics and the nostalgics. The former are as contemporaryminded as the day's newspapers: prodigious readers of books about the war and students of every shred of news from the battle-fronts and the propaganda machines. These are among our modern heroes. One honours them. But the nostalgics—how different! If the news is good they will drink in every word of it; let it be bad and they will cast the evening paper aside unread, hope for the best, and retreat into a novel by Proust or

their dream of having the outside of the house repainted. Fortunately it can easily be demonstrated that as citizens the nostalgics are in no way inferior to the others. The difference is merely one of war technique.

Well, it happens that the storm of the times is absent, or very nearly so, from this miscellany, and therefore I cannot expect it to be snatched up by the contemporary-minded person. Nor does it peer through the shadows towards the unknowable post-war world. If anything it looks backward, and nostalgia for small pre-war pleasures emerges from the pages: for days by the sea, for country drives and birds, beasts and flowers, for listening to new gramophone records from America, for cricket, for resurrecting old stories of crime. Here, then, is a tranquil book without a thunderclap of any kind. I leave it to the attention of the gentle reader.

The second volume of The Saturday Book will, it is hoped, appear in the autumn of 1942. Readers are invited to send new—that is, unpublished—essays, stories, impressions, or observations for consideration, and need not feel themselves restricted by the choice of subject or arrangement of the present book. MSS. should be addressed to me at 47 Princes Gate, London, S.W. 7, and should arrive not later than the end of May.

August, 1941.

L.R.

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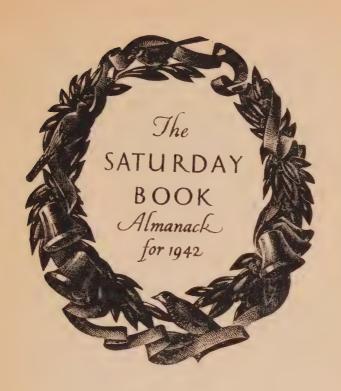
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THE ILLUSTRATIONS

The wood engravings throughout the book, including the title page design and the endpapers, are by Agnes Miller Parker.

The borders and the lettering are by ALBERT E. BARLOW.

The four headpieces to the Almanack are by RANDOLPH SCHWABE.







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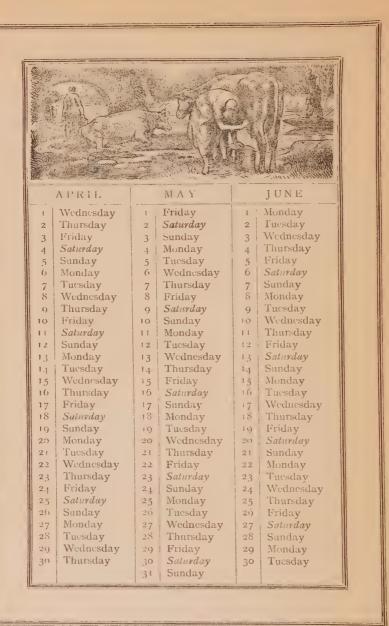
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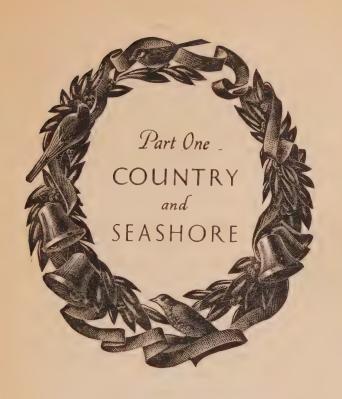
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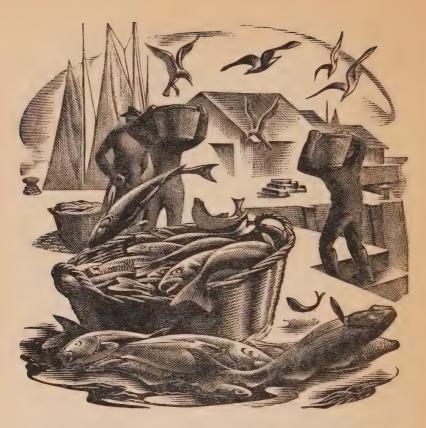




N PEACE-TIME, if you could call it that, we used to wait for a cloudless morning any time from early spring to November, and then drive down through the flat Thanet country, the Kent marshes, or across the rolling Sussex hinterland to the sea: either eastward as far as the white dunes of Sandwich bay, where in winter the wind comes straight off the ice of the Baltic, or southward to the flat wide shores beyond the Dymchurch sea-wall and the old military canal, or southwestward to Hastings and Rye, where small Scandinavian timber ships used to lie high on the mud slopes at low tide, unloading golden cargoes of timber among the black wooden warehouses on the narrow quay. Between these eastward and westward points there is a considerable range of countryside and almost as wide a range of shore. From the upland orchard country beyond the North Downs, protected and broken up by woods of pine and beech, you can see far off the broken glass of the sea-pools on the marshes and sometimes a flock of sails turning in the wind on summer days; or from the south slope of the Downs, where the bluebells are like blue hill-lakes in the breaks of the beech-woods and the wild strawberries are so common that you tire of gathering them on breezy-warm June afternoons, you can turn south-westward and see the smoke-stacks of ships steaming up the Channel as they come in close at Dungeness and sometimes the very faint line of the horizon, without which they seem to move like shadowy toys, gliding in slow suspense between land and air. From this same point you can see the hump-back line of the South Downs, forty miles away, and the Weald between. The impression is of unbroken greenness, of fields, hedgerows, woodland, with perhaps a cloud of moving smoke from a train or a wisp of stationary smoke that is an orchard in bloom in spring: the impression of a land hardly populated.

It was down through this sort of country that we used to make the coast journeys for which it was always so easy, in peace-time, to find a light excuse: the cloudlessness of the day itself, the need for change, a bathe, a walk on cliffs or shore, to wave goodbye to ships, to make sand-castles, to buy fish. Down on the harbourquay at Folkestone the smacks used to lie close in under the steep walls, copper sails flagged in the shelter of the harbour, light fawn-gold nets slung out on the drying poles in the sun, swinging like curtains, lobster-pots stacked here and there on the fish-smeared flag-stones or piled under the low railway arches over which the boat-trains ran into the port. Whenever you went there it seemed the fish was just in. It was in the boats and they were piling it into bath-tins and bringing it ashore up the steps; or it was already ashore and it lay everywhere, if it was a good catch, on the concrete floor of the market, in tins and boxes or baskets, silvery, bloody, still leaping, orange-spotted plaice, halibut, dog-fish, cod,

B I



soles, mackerel, herring, oceans of silver sprats, with the gulls screaming and diving above; or the auctioneer was already selling it to a crowd that never seemed to be listening but only gazing heavily at the wet concrete where the dog-fish were still panting and leaping and the turbot looked like solid marble; or it was already sold and they were skinning the dog-fish and packing the boxes for the trains and the old men were already baiting the lines for another trip and the hawkers already piling the fish into lumps on the barrows standing between the chandler's store and the mission hall. 'Sixpence a lump lady, where you like.'

You walked past and looked at all the barrows and thought of how much you paid for stale cod a hundred miles from the coast or the price of fried sole in Piccadilly. You walked past and came back and finally picked your barrow. If it were a hot slack day, or for that matter a cold raw day, the man had gone for a drink and somebody fetched him; he came wiping the beer off his mouth and threw a bucket of water over the white lumps of plaice and sole and halibut and flapped a fish on the board. 'Sixpence a lump lady.' But you knew the game and you made a wholesale deal. 'How much for half a crown?' Little plaice, sweet as nuts, would be about a penny, fat soles ninepence or a shilling, halibut big enough for a family round about two shillings. He would throw in the halibut and half a dozen plaice, or a dozen plaice and a couple of soles. You pretended it wasn't good enough and he said 'Lady, don't ruin me! I'm gonna be married! Don't ruin me before I start lady!' We would pull his leg, 'Married? You're ruined already.' He was a nice fellow, brown, blueeyed, smiling, and in the end, according to him, you broke his heart. For three shillings he wrapped up the halibut and a couple of soles or three soles and half a dozen plaice and he was quite happy. 'Fillet 'em for you, lady?' Then you broke his back. One of the children would produce a penny and speak her piece. 'Judith wants a fish too,' she would say, and at that he would break down. 'Judith wants a fish, Judith wants a fish, Judith wants a fish! So Judith wants a fish does she? Oh hell! give her a fish! Do the others want one too?' And we would say Yes, the others wanted one too, and he would say Oh hell! give them all one, and at last we would come away, everyone laughing, the children each carrying the penny

plaice wrapped in newspaper and all of us waving

good-bye.

It is a year since you could make an excursion like that and now only millionaires eat fish. Beyond the last nets hanging to dry on the chains of the quay-wall there used to be an amusement park with shooting gallery and bumpers and slot machines and a whelk-stall. On hot summer days the air was startling with the smell of sun-warmed seaweed, the fish, the whelks and the vinegar. On the stretch of dirty sand beyond the harbour hundreds of people paddled and bathed, dug in the sand and slept. The white channel steamers came in fast, turning to come in stern first, and coasters slipped away beyond the high white point of chalk that dazzled like snow in the sun.

From this point westward to the flat shore of Winchelsea Beach there was scarcely a mile of the coast that did not hurt the eyes. As the cliffs end and the land abruptly breaks down to the level of the marsh the frowsy ribbon of seaside houses and huts unrolls itself. The high sea-wall is broken at intervals by the old Martello towers and at last by the dunes seaward from New Romney. It is this piece of coast that is full of Napoleonic memories and of odd Napoleonic monuments, such as the Martello towers and the military canal. and which is, as in Napoleonic days, a vital line of defence against whatever may come in from the sea. The piece of country immediately behind it inspired someone to a comparison with the Roman Campagna and led to an old saying that the world was divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Romney Marsh. This flat strange sea-country, of rich sheep-pasture, of dykes feathered with reed, of great deserted stretches of inland shingle, would be held sometimes on hot after-



noons of July and August in a sort of lofty reflected glow of light that gave it a sense of superb remoteness. Wind would turn the willow leaves grey-white in the sun; the tall mauve-pink marsh-mallows, like delicate wild holly-hocks, would sway among the clusters of reed and willow-herb and purple loosestrife that marked the lines of dykes across the pastures. I have never seen these mallows elsewhere, and the taller tree-mallow, which is rare among coastal rocks in the south and west, not at all. Both may be called sea-flowers; both occur only near the coasts of England and Ireland, rarely in Scotland.

The sea has on flowers something of the same effect as altitude. It rarefies them. It reduces them, like the toy passenger train that peeps and shrieks across the flat marsh from Hythe to the point at Dungeness, to a

miniature level. Dune and shore and tideless stretches of shingle correspond to alpine moraine and scree, in which starvation produces delicacy. Yet there are flowers here, on the marsh shingles, which by all associations do not seem to belong here. The thrift of cottage gardens, neat green pincushions stuck with hat pins whose pink heads are like everlasting flowers preserved on the slate mantelpieces of unused front rooms, seems to have no right to be called sea-pink. You see it everywhere across the shingle, the beach as they call it, flowering from about midsummer onwards even as far as October, when the sea-gales begin to whip the skin off the land. Its prim pink flowers edge the roadside, seed across the railway track. They spring up in the sun-cracks on the concrete paths and on the unsold lots of the new holiday towns that lie in naked concrete strips between marsh and sea.

Someday someone will write about the life of these towns of one street that runs for miles parallel to the sea: the white harsh light rebounding from the seaclean concrete, the side-walks that are never finished, the dune-sand drifting hotly in the front-porches, the whole sense of raw impermanence, of decay that sets in before the paint is dry on the names of shops and houses, the sense that the sea is inexorably taking back, by wind and sand and sea-air and the winter barrage of sand and shingle and even by the casual trespass of sea-flowers on the side-walks, all that has been taken away from it. You read sometimes of South American towns which march as far as the edge of tropical forests and then stop. to have the finger-ends of their civilisation bitten and chewed and scarred and stunted by advancing vegetation, the tropical creepers, the trees and the flowers. This is the same effect: of sea and such sea-vegetation as there is eternally fretting and scarring the concrete of civilisation, never giving it a chance to set.

So if you wanted to find sea-flowers all you had to do was to walk in the hollows of the dunes that form a sea-wall for the white rows of new villas, or walk along the



street until there was a break in the houses. On the dunes they were more natural and more beautiful than down on the vacant lots, but even there you would find magnificent clumps of orange sea-poppy and blue trees of sea-holly and tussocks of sea-pink. In August, on the dunes which by then seemed as hot as oven-bricks to your

bare feet after the cool sea, sea-convolvulus would be very lovely in the hollows among the sea-grasses: quite large pink trumpets of morning-glory growing flat on the hot sand. Sea-holly too was lovely all over these dunes. Something like a miniature silver-blue tree, part holly, part thistle, strange and artificial, it is exactly of sea colour, blue touched with salt, and sharp as if scissored out of steel. You could gather that too on the side-walks and the building lots, but loveliest of all perhaps was the orange sea-poppy which grows all across shingle, dune and marsh: big handsome yellow-orange horned flowers on sea-grey leaves.

All these are true sea-flowers, never really far from the shore fringe. But back in the marsh across which the little train toots God knows how many times a day, so playful and fast that you get the impression that one day it will toot beyond the black fisher-huts and the new villas of Dungeness Point into the sea and go tooting across the Channel to join another little train that starts from the middle of the street at Morlaix and toots over the heather to St. Jean du Doit in Brittany, there are flowers growing in the stretches of barren shingle that are outside their proper world. For this is a strange place for fox-gloves, which supposedly revel in woodland shade and coolness. Yet they grow here in great quantities in the shingle, on stretches of arid land whipped by sea-wind and baked by sun. They root deeply and are startling, red-pink, on the flat yellow-brown distances of pebbles. Later in summer there is viper's bugloss here too, starved by shingle into sharp loveliness, a little like some hairy handsome overgrown forget-me-not, bright sailor blue touched with pink, brilliant on the dry summer shingle.

Here on this flat land the impression is always of the

sea as the predominant force; it is always the everlasting prospective invader. Its shingle has long since been left or flung far inland, aridly beautiful, bringing with it the sea-flowers and a kind of sea-change to such landflowers as the fox-gloves. Farther along the coast, westward, where the cliffs begin again, the land dominates the sea. East of Hastings the Sussex woods, luminous with primroses and anemones in spring, come down to the edge of the cliffs. Dark thorns are beaten back like torn umbrellas by the sea-winds, only to burst into flower like trees of sea-spray. Here you could lie on warm summer afternoons and watch the waves rolling softly in like white kittens on the shore below, not feeling that what should be the precious coast of England had been cut and parcelled up like a stick of cheap pink-andwhite rock with the name of the speculator running through the middle. Farther west still, at a spot like Cuckmere Haven, the corn-land too comes down to edge of cliff and bay, the August corn sugar-brown against the blue-white plain of sky and sea beyond, and there is again the feeling that this is the coast as it should be, the natural fusion of sea and land without the barrier line of concrete speculation.

You get the same feeling—and of course there must be other places, too—on the west coast of Scotland, where seals play in the breakers among the dark rocks, and the fuchsias bloom like trees of red and purple bells and the smell of sun-baked seaweed is good and warm and savage all along the loch-sides where the sheep come down to feed on it at low tide. The memory of such summer sea days excites nostalgia. There is in one of Malachi Whitaker's stories a man who expresses a longing to see the sea again, and there must be many people who feel like that to-day, people to whom the loss of the sea, in war-

time, is something almost as acute as the loss of sugar. In the last war, there being no considered danger of invasion, we kept going to the sea, and though I remember we once stayed with a lady whose ideas about food were so good that my father went out immediately after breakfast every morning and ate two boiled eggs at the restaurant round the corner, on the whole it was very good. You got then the last glimpse of another age: the age when a motor car was a luxury, when a plane was an exciting sight, when the church parade of dresses along the promenade on Sunday mornings was still an elegant institution, when men wore straw hats and white flannels, when you lived a hundred miles from the sea and it was so like an excursion into a dream world that vou began to lean out of the train window at Sevenoaks in order to persuade yourself that you could smell the sea at Eastbourne.

If you went on such excursions you know that part of your life is bound up with the landlady's aspidistra, with your father's whispered comments on the steak, with the smell of dinners floating from the big hotels along the promenade in the evenings, the concert party on the sands, the tilted sunshades of old ladies asleep in deckchairs below the gently waving bushes of pink tamarisk, the smell of cab-horses waiting in the hot sun, of seaanemones in the rock-pools at low tide and the treasured piece of sea-weed so carefully gathered and wrapped in a towel and taken home and hung under the verandah so that you could tell when it would rain. It is bound up with the feeling made on your bare feet by the hard tideripples of the sand as you ran across it. It is bound up. so that any summer day on the sea-shore you could see grown men who had never lost the habit of it, with the joy of looking for the things the sea washes up, corks,

razor shells, banners and fans of crimson and emerald seaweed, drifts of pink and cream and blue and purple shells, frosty sea-smoothed glass, jelly-fish, star-fish, dead gulls. It is bound up with Madame Soandso singing with great heavings of her pork-white breast something from Il Trovatore among the palms and plush of the Winter Gardens, with the carpet-beds depicting in sombre tones of claret and grey and gold God Save their Majesties, and with the day you let your grandmother's



open umbrella sail gloriously away on the windy sands of Skegness and nobody but you thought it funny.

Such feelings, so comically tender and trivial now, have been described as 'feelings that bind our years together in a deep secretive piety.' It is certain that as I go down through the Kent marshes or through the primrose valleys of South Sussex there arises the strange and uneasy feeling that I am touching the fringes of another existence. I am made aware of it even by the sight of wild cabbage and the grey handsome fronds of seakale growing in the chalk of the coast cliffs, by the sight of silver-fawn reeds left standing through autumn and

winter along the marsh dykes long after the reed-harvest is over. There is a touch of it, fainter, but still disturbing, as I cross the open country, much of it unenclosed, lying landward from Ramsgate, where the high summer light falling on the white fields of August barley seems seawashed, almost candescent, on days of serene swanwhite cloud, and it is increased a little as I stand in the street of some half-forgotten inland port like Faversham and suddenly catch sight of a mast beyond a break in the dark red houses. Time pulls back for a moment with fascinating magnetism; and as I stood once on the shores of Cape Cod, where the old-fashioned tubs of coastal passenger steamers pull in fast out of the evening mist and suddenly swing their tiers of lights to a standstill against the wooden jetty, the same feeling took hold of me: a dead existence resurrected, momentarily claiming The odd thing is that there in the Cape the houses are the same shape, the roofs as it were doublesloped, as these of the true Kent style; the old port houses are wooden and high and straggly, painted grey or cream or blue or sometimes black, as they are in the Kentish ports, and as you see them you get again the feeling of having come home. Only the crowds of big crimson and white single Indian roses straggling everywhere along the roadsides going down to the sea's edge are at all strange.

It is a year since I was down on the coast. You could see the convoys of merchantmen waiting off the white point of the cliffs before entering the contraband control. A mine was tossing a little out to seaward from the wall; the fish-hawkers, who had little or nothing to sell but lumps of yellow haddock, would talk to you of the dead Nazi airmen that were washed up every day on the shore. The air of decay was already hardening at a moment

when it should have been lessening: ice-cream parlours closing up, amusements boarded up, paint peeling away, hotels unopened. There is no air of decay quite like the forlornness that descends on a coast-town that puts up its shutters, and God and the coast army alone know what has happened to those one-street towns half-buried in sand behind the dunes, where even in peace-time seaholly and sea-poppy grew in the cracks of the street. In spite of all the hard white ugliness it would be good to be there again: to see the floppy pink convolvulus open on the hot sand, the myriads of little coloured shells left after the tide, the shoals of glistening transparent jellyfish



littering the shore, the bright fox-gloves and viper's bugloss and sea-pink flowering across the lonely marshes where people walk on the shingle in long flat-bottomed wooden shoes that are strapped on to the feet, to hear the scream of gulls and the voice of the miniature train tooting across the dykes along which kingfishers come down like blue and copper arrows to the edge of the sea, the train tooting and peeping like a grown-up toy in a toy peace-time world. Toy train, penny plaice, sea-flowers, peace-time world. But it's no use getting sentimental now.

AS I PASSED BY

H.J. Massingham

December 7



FFLEY CHURCH. THE village is set along a slight ridge along the water meadows. No change, no progress: the adjustment was made once and for all and stays there.

Suddenly between Horsepath and Cowley, a violent wrench of time. Miles of raw villas, set down in rows anywhere like a child's toys and yet with a symmetry of house by house begot in the likeness of its neighbour. They sprawl and yet are drilled into uniformity, making the worst of both worlds. The church in its setting of trees is a plunge back on the Time Machine. Norman doorways are three, with much decoration; one is of a centaur carrying off a woman, a classical theme used to the glory of the Christian God. In this Norman church, strength is at one with fantasy, serenity of form co-exists with profusion of ornament. The church has got everything right; the hundreds of contemporary buildings that encroach upon it like weeds upon plants in a neglected garden have got everything wrong. The one is an imposition, the other a growth out of something. Architecture is after all the first and final test: it is what we place upon the elemental earth. There is a more radical difference

between primitive and civilised even than knowledge of metals or agriculture: it is the difference between natural shelters and artificial houses. The suburban idea regards the earth as mere ground to be filled up and the houses as mere labour-saving hutches to 'live' in. Nature will replace this discord with something in right relation to her laws.

A walk in the fog. Unable to see through the screen, I could not but amuse myself with the structural differences between trees whose skeletons were disclosed out of their grey winding sheets. They were mostly oaks and elms. Elms soar. Their branches begin higher up the bole than those of oaks, and the angle to the bole is narrower. The twigs follow the same skiey tendency so that the whole tree is surging upwards. The oak has lateral extensions; its knuckled angularity has no sympathy with streamlining. Quercus possesses the archaic grandeur of pure sculpture; its broken contorted outlines present the ultimate aspects of pure design; whereas the elm is pursuing an ideal. You can tell the difference when each tree is only a tree-like thickening of the atmosphere.

January 26

HORACE told me much about sheep. If you are 'duberous' of a sheep's age look at the teeth. A 'teg' (first year) has lamb's teeth, a 'thave' (second year) four adult teeth and a 'yo' (ewe) six adult teeth. Lambs usually have their tails cut off with a sharp knife soon after birth, when they hardly notice the injury. But if the tails are left on, they fatten best for 'Easter' lambs. Lambs recognise their mothers in a flock by the different intonations of the 'baa.' The ewes recognise their lambs,



on the other hand, by smell. Horace once induced a ewe to feed a lamb not her own by tying the fleece of her own dead lamb upon it, a common custom. When the sheep are shorn round about Oak Apple Day, some of the lambs fail to recognise their mothers and so wean themselves by taking to grass.

January 29

FRED DORSET bought four pounds of potatoes during the snow, so that he might feed the birds. A woman knew of it and said, 'What! Would ye offer the food to the birds before ye would me?' 'Of course I would,' said Fred Dorset, 'birds hasn't no language to ask for food and hands to get it with.'

Lord William, the retired farm labourer, still

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believes he is the King of all Europe and still has memories of his mermaid wife, whom he sometimes confuses with the daughter of the King of Germany. There is no man in the world more contented and happy. He has his barn to sleep in, his old-age pension for his food, his hands to cook it, his mouth to eat it, and a good digestion to crown all. He has his palace of straw and corrugated iron for shelter, and he has his imperial dreams. He still maintains that he is the richest man in all Europe, and perhaps he is right.

One of the men at the garage in the market town takes a great interest in archæology and has explored all the old roads in the neighbourhood. He told me that a magnificent elm of which nothing remains now except the butt had 'druidical' associations and the old people used to worship it. And this man's work is entirely among motor cars. A 'sweet eversion,' as Charles Lamb said.

January 31

SIXMONTHS of heavy rains. The floods in the low-lying lands are like a little choppy sea, and the fields are impassable without Wellingtons. On such a landscape Neolithic Man often looked in winter from the dryer downs. The neglect of ditches and hedges aggravates the sweep of the waters, which, under the moon, look like a miniature delta of the Amazons. Great blocks of foam collect under the bridge arches, through which the river rolls its turbid yellow racing flood. Gates stand with only their top cross-bar visible, banks become almost level causeways, hedges are rootless, willows are the only islands in shoreless lakes. The ferocious northeast wind squeals round the house like an enraged rhinoceros. George West told me that in 1881, just such

another day occurred, followed by a blizzard. A cart filled with straw and drawn by two horses was flung bodily, horses and all, over the hedge and turned topsyturvy by the crowbar of the wind. His father went a few yards up the road to fetch some oil and, when he returned, his beard was frozen stiff to his coat.

February 18

WHEN Lord William goes to the market on Tuesday. his round and shining face is as smooth-shaven as hard sand; he wears a dickie and a tie and his corduroy breeches and boots are brushed and polished. Behind him is his shack, no bigger than a small summer-house and, though so flimsy you could push it over, heavily padlocked. He can prove, he says, he was once King of all Europe. They dragged him, he will say, over the sharp shells of the sea-shore and made him bleed, and 'the strain of royal blood' that flowed proved that he was the King. Now he lives in a hovel wherein a sixfoot man could only just lie at full-length. Is he bitter against all those lords and farmers and emperors who have deprived him of his possessions? No, he is the Happy Man: the world is welcome to deprive him of his all. The Merman who came to Notley Pool and was his wife's father was just like you and me, except that his three heads were of fishes. At night this ex-king retires to his manger, where another but younger king once slept, and without light or pillows or mattress or book lays himself down to sleep while the wind crawls like a snake through the rafters and nuzzles like a wolf at the cracks. Paying no taxes nor rent nor rates and enjoying every moment of his life, truly is he called Lord William.

February 20

To-DAY the earth turned sweet with the unconceived wheat or like the wonderful bronze, belonging to a friend of mine, of the plumed swan waving in a flame of white over the Leda whose limbs relax under the burden of love. In the garden, the crocus opens wide with the aconite, two golds meeting, the one tardy, the other 'frim' and rathe. Lark sings on high, dunnock domestically in the hedge, clouds drift lazily but with full canvas as though on a cruise of pleasure, the whitethorn is stippled with pearls, elm-buds redden and the balsams begin to exude their gum. The chaffinch begins to sing, but not yet so confidently as to crack out that hey-ho at the end which is April's madrigal.

February 25

SHROVE TUESDAY—when they mourned the death of Osiris; when they fight with the silver ball in Cornwall: with the football at Ashbourne: when they toss the pancake; when the old rites between sky-world and underworld took battailous form; when ritualistic combat symbolised the contest between sleep and awakening, between the light and the darkness; when the rhythmic courses of nature stirred the rhythmic observances of man; when the toad comes from under the stone, splits the old suit, rolls it into a ball, swallows it and makes for the pond in his new spring habit; when the Queen Wasp has chosen her nest in the bank and is busy fetching rotten wood to it from the pile; when the lambs run races and stop dead; when the blackbirds fight in the road and the raven nests in his fastness and the thrush plasters her daub within the screen of the hedge; when the naked, shivering spring sets forth to seek her wedding gown and all living things raise their matins to a sun who brings the day but not himself. Of these things I dreamed, while Jumbo told his hair-raising tale of his mastery over bulls, how he would step aside from the angry monster tearing after him and swing round to strike behind his foreleg. This fells the bull and takes all the temper out of him. The north wind shoots his arrows from no Cupid's quiver, but all things rise and come forth as though his shafts were beams.

March 1

FEBRUARY ended in snow; March opens with it. A severe winter like this one reveals the neglect of the land. The water stands in the uncleaned ditches and kills the hedge. I see elder which poisons the whitethorn and willows which kill the undergrowth, originally planted for stakes but now grown up into trees. Farmers, says Horace, are to-day mere land-occupiers, for the good farmer lays his hedges every twelve years when the wood remains green and pliable. The same laissez-faire appears in the furrowed fields. The old farmers crossed their furrows with a headland and channelled them for the water to run down to the ditches. Because this is no longer done, bare patches appear where the standing water has killed the grain. Such treatment is particularly heavy on white winter and black winter oats. Where proper drainage is lacking, the wheat fails to 'tiller,' that is to say, throw out shoots from the main stem. In a dry winter the wheat throws up only flags, and the true farmer mows this off or puts his sheep on it to crop it to the ground. If the former, he puts it in a

pit with a layer of brine upon it. It remains green and has the consistency of hay-cake, an anticipation of silage.

April 30

My INJURED arm produced the following observations at the Inn. Old Fugle was laid low by sciatica for a twelvementh and if he contrived to walk twenty yards he never knew how he would get back again. So he took the advice of another sufferer and scattered a little powdered sulphur into his boots. It penetrated his whole body. When he shook his shirt in front of the fire, blue sparks came out of it. His hair crackled when he rubbed his head. He possessed the legendary properties of the devil. And in a short while he was a whole man. Another sufferer was seventy and so crippled with rheumatism that his hands were more misshapen than a gorilla's. He was hired for the hop-drying, where the fumes of sulphur were used. He spent six weeks among them and came away restored. Said another on the subject of pneumonia and bronchitis. Buy two sheeps' entrails from the butcher, slice them flat and place each one along the sole of the foot. Then mix home-cured lard with mustard and rub it on the chest and back. As soon as you are convalescent, as assuredly you will be, take off the 'meults' and throw them in the fire. But you must not look at them, because the sickness has been drawn into the 'meults' and they are not fit for the human vision. The subject of boils came up and the cure for that is the heads of 'clite' or cleavers (Jack-run-the-hedge) which should be boiled in a saucepan and drunk when tepid. They would not have it that the root of dock (good for nettle-sting) was a cure for boils, because it was a drug when boiled, a sort of home-made wine. This sickness was then dropped for the even more congenial topic of home-made wines and their capacity to lay a man out in a different way from sickness.

May 20

It is Horace's view that when the north or east wind blows on quarter day, it will continue there until midsummer day. The hay-crop, in spite of the winter rains, will be a poor one. The 'bents' or 'bennets' are beginning to flower, but there is no bottom grass. This 'latimas' grass, in Horace's words, makes growth after the haysel and 'latimas' must therefore be a corruption of the 'Lammas' meadows of the open-field system which by the old calendar were opened for grazing on August 12.

June 5

THE FAIR is now in full swing. It is almost the only one left in all the county and is a survival of the day when every village in post-Whitsun week had its fair, and, more important, its band. The band, after lunching stoutly at a formal banquet supplied out of club funds, made a procession round the village and the fair followed in the evening. The procession betrays the antiquity of the custom, since all or nearly all the old customs of the true and living village community began or ended in a procession, ultimately dating from heathen times when the actors dressed to represent the gods. Avebury and Stonehenge both bear witness to the archaic origins of the procession. But the younger

generation began to drop out and the bands were supported only by the old people, who year by year were removed by death. One village would lose its band and borrow another's until one band did service for a round of villages on different days. In the end the band vanished and only the fair was left—in one village. In Gloucestershire there is a tale that the villagers used to put the pigs on the stone walls to see the band go by.

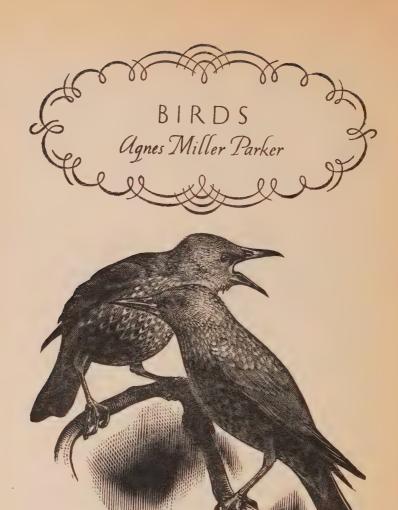
June 29

COLLECTING my orchard hav into cocks gave me some forlorn sense of this ancient communal labour. Though the work consisted no more than in building as many symmetrical round barrows as possible, I soon found that even here there is skill—in making the surround without ragged edges, in getting the right balance, in arranging the fragrant wisps, and most of all in raising the right number of mounds of the same size and grouped to make a pleasant effect. It is tiring work on a hot day, though one's burdens be light. But the hay throws off a refracted heat even when the sun is not shining, so that a hay-field is higher in temperature than elsewhere. It is a kind of heat-mirror. Best of all, of course, is the pervading aroma of the hay, coming in regular waves of overpowering sweetness and pungency. It is all English country condensed into a few dead stalks and remaining in the nostrils long after the toil is done. Thought is suspended, but labour never automatic. while a musical rustle accompanies all one's motions, so that scent and sound and movement make a captivating whole. If the heat and fatigue be not too great, it is the best exercise for the body I know.

June 30

IN THE New Forest near Lyndhurst I met an addercatcher full of a schoolmaster he had recently met who deprecated the killing of adders. He argued with him for three days and then asked him if he would like to go to bed with one. The joke was still so fresh in his mind that he twisted his aged joints in glee.





STARLINGS

Starlings as it were swim along, while missel-thrushes use a wild and desultory flight. . . .

GILBERT WHITE1

¹ This extract and the others which follow are from the Nonesuch edition of Gilbert White, 1937, edited by H. J. Massingham.



SWIFT

Swifts, as I suspected, invariably lay but two eggs; and as they breed but once, their encrease is very small! I got Harry's bricklayer one evening to open the tiles of his brew-house, under which were several nests containing only two squab young apiece; and moreover his workmen all told me that, when boys, they had invariably found only two eggs or two birds. If I lived at Fyfield I should be more learned in swifts; for as you sit in the parlor, you see their proceedings at the brew-house.



CUCKOO

In July I saw several cuckoos skimming over a large pond; and found, after observation, that they were feeding on the libellulæ, or dragon-flies; some of which they caught as they settled on the weeds, and some as they were on the wing. Notwithstanding what Linnæus says, I cannot be induced to believe that they are birds of prey.



KITE

Kites and buzzards sail round in circles with wings expanded and motionless; and it is from their gliding manner that the former are still called in the north of England gleads, from the Saxon verb glidan, to glide.



PARTRIDGE

Another instance I remember of a sportsman, whose zeal for the increase of his game being greater than his humanity, after pairing-time he always shot the cock-bird of every couple of partridges upon his grounds: supposing that the rivalry of many males interrupted the breed: he used to say, that, though he had widowed the same hen several times, yet he found she was still provided with a fresh paramour, that did not take her away from her usual haunt.

Again; I knew a lover of setting, an old sportsman, who has often told me that soon after harvest he has frequently taken small coveys of partridges, consisting of cock-birds alone; these he pleasantly used to call old bachelors.



GROUSE

But there was a nobler species of game in this forest, now extinct, which I have heard old people say abounded much before shooting flying became so common, and that was the heath-cock, black game, or grouse. When I was a little boy I recollect one coming now and then to my father's table. The last pack remembered was killed about thirty-five years ago; and within these ten years one solitary grey hen was sprung by some beagles in beating for a hare. The sportsmen cried out, 'A hen pheasant'; but a gentleman present, who had often seen grouse in the north of England, assured me that it was a greyhen.



NIGHTINGALE

Ightingales not only never reach Northumber-land and Scotland, but also, as I have been always told, Devonshire and Cornwall. In those two last counties we cannot attribute the failure of them to the want of warmth: the defect in the west is rather a presumptive argument that these birds come over to us from the continent at the narrowest passage, and do not stroll so far westward.



FIELDFARE

I have discovered an anecdote with respect to the fieldfare (turdus pilaris) which I think is particular enough: this bird, though it sits on trees in the day-time, and procures the greatest part of it's food from whitethorn hedges; yea, moreover, builds on very high trees; as may be seen by the fauna suecica; yet always appears with us to roost on the ground. They are seen to come in flocks just before it is dark, and to settle and nestle among the heath on our forest.

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ROOKS

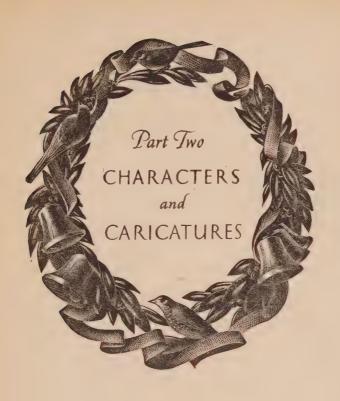
If we do not much wonder to see a flock of rooks usually attended by a train of daws, yet it is strange that the former should so frequently have a flight of starlings for their satellites. Is it because rooks have a more discerning scent than their attendants, and can lead them to spots more productive of food? Anatomists say that rooks, by reason of two large nerves which run down between the eyes into the upper mandible, have a more delicate feeling in their beaks than other round-billed birds, and can grope for their meat when out of sight.



LAPWING

Soon after the lapwings have done breeding they congregate, and, leaving the moors and marshes, betake themselves to downs and sheep-walks.





THE EDUCATION OF NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN Philip Guedalla



AISED IN THE blameless unorthodoxy of a Unitarian home, the infant Neville Chamberlain looked out upon the world in the first years of Queen Victoria's widowhood.

The world that met his infant gaze was not conspicuously enlivening—first, a devoted family; then the comfortable home of a successful business man; and beyond the garden gate a busy vista of the civic virtues, where Birmingham was just awakening to the novel and exciting possibilities of city government and popular education.

It was the year 1869, when Mr. Gladstone was the Queen's Prime Minister and a name of terror to Conservatives, and Victorian England was the workshop of the world. The proud father was a busy Midland manufacturer of screws, whose firm outdistanced their competitors by the shrewd purchase of two American patents. No less progressive in their marketing, they positively humoured their French customers by listing good British screws in the outlandish metric weights and measures for which the subjects of Napoleon III had an eccentric preference, and by wrapping them in the garish blue paper which appealed to Continental taste. For Messrs. Nettlefold & Chamberlain moved with the

times; and no small part of their rapidity was due to the sharp features and trim figure of Joseph Chamberlain, the junior partner, now a father for the third time. A Londoner, he saw the light on the less fashionable bank of the Thames at Camberwell and had been sent to London schools of no particular social pretensions. The family shoe factory was waiting to receive him. But when his father made a considerable investment in the Midland screw business, the youthful Joseph was sent up to Birmingham to keep an eye on his father's money. That was how he came to found a family and play an active part in the provincial city.

The children (there were three) played in the suburban garden of a comfortable home, while their father marketed his screws and taught on Sunday afternoons and week-day evenings at the classes of his Unitarian Church. Their surroundings were respectable, if undistinguished. For the English provinces in 1870, or thereabouts, lacked glamour. A similar phenomenon was visible about the same time on the farther side of the Atlantic, of which the patronising Disraeli wearily observed that he supposed American society to be like 'the best society in Manchester.' And Birmingham was not far different. There were no ancient battlements in their suburban background, no Norman ancestors in their commercial pedigree. Had not the poet Tennyson assured them that kind hearts were more than coronets and simple faith than Norman blood? So, in default of noble lineage, they made the best of sober qualities. A sound provincial atmosphere assured a healthy lack of nonsense; and as the sharp Midland air had always been unfriendly to pretence, its human products were apt to be precisely what they claimed. Business men are usually realists, since they frequently

go out of business on the day after they lose touch with reality. So most things in Birmingham were what they seemed, a circumstance that proved unhelpful to young Neville when his later life brought him in close contact with more deceptive elements.

This unromantic scene unfolded round the child in Trade was brisk, until it presently Birmingham. reached such a point that the junior partner in Messrs. Nettlefold & Chamberlain could afford to retire from business. Joseph was no more than thirty-eight; but public life seemed to hold more interest than a lifetime passed in selling screws to reluctant purchasers. Not that he plunged into the more sensational department of politics, since he entered public life by the quiet gateway of the School Board and the Town Council. He had no hereditary advantages as a political apprentice. No family retainers waited to elect him to a freehold seat in Parliament. If he ever got to Westminster, he would have to reach that elevation by the popularity of his opinions. For this retired manufacturer was quite surprisingly progressive. His Unitarian creed aligned him with the Nonconformists, with 'chapel' in its endless war against the privilege of 'church'; and his opinions upon other questions were summarized in the alarming slogan of 'free church, free schools, free land, free labour.' Indeed, his taste for freedom went so far as to cast doubts upon the permanent utility of monarchy itself. For this owner of American patents, not averse from other products of America, had positively declared that he should not 'feel any great horror at the idea of the possible establishment of a republic in our country.' So when Joseph Chamberlain was Mayor of Birmingham and his year of office was selected by the Prince and Princess of Wales for a royal visit to the city, England

held its breath and waited for the worst. But all went well, and *Punch* cartooned him as a mildly purring lion whose claws were gently clipped by the lovely Princess Alexandra, as he

put his red cap in his pocket, and sat on his Fortnightly article,
And of red republican claws or teeth displayed not so much as a particle.

So the republican Mayor of Birmingham faded imperceptibly into the respectable Liberal, who was bringing up his family in the provincial virtues. His favourite precept, framed in the best spirit of Washington's biographer, enjoined upon his children, 'Always tell the truth; everything can be forgiven if you have told the truth.' Indeed, his own method in the field of politics was almost uniformly outspoken. A flatfooted positiveness marked his utterance. For Joseph Chamberlain was never more himself than when years later he informed his hearers in an Anglo-German controversy, 'What I have said, I have said. I withdraw nothing. I qualify nothing. I defend nothing.' For the elder Chamberlain never 'rowed to his object with muffled oars,' as John Randolph of Roanoke once said so vividly of Martin Van Buren; and perhaps the downright method was his chief bequest to both his sons.

With these ideals (and the school's convenient proximity to Birmingham) it was not surprising that he sent his boys to Rugby. Besides, there were no social frills about the school of the type that might have rendered Eton distasteful (and possibly uncomfortable) to any son of Joseph Chamberlain, late of Camberwell and now of Birmingham and Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet.

But the most conspicuous thing about it-after the rooks and the great elms on Bigside and the flat strike of the School clock-was its elevated moral tone. For Thomas Arnold's school retained a high proportion of the simpler moral values glorified in Tom Brown's Schooldays. Some, indeed, of its alumni have been tempted to deplore their early training in truth-telling and decent conduct as a grave impediment to their material success in later life. The world, alas! has lower standards than Hillmorton Road; and it was, perhaps, significant that no Rugbeian contrived to enter 10 Downing Street as Prime Minister before Neville Chamberlain himself. The school was strenuously virtuous, as befitted the homeland of 'muscular Christianity.' Cold baths, uncompromising standards, and excessive exercise prepared the soil on which its teachers dropped the scattered seeds of classical attainment; and the presence of a high proportion of north-country boys coming from homes of manufacturers ensured a healthy lack of snobbery. Eton and Harrow were both apt to be romantic and respectful about titled youth. But Rugby was just rude, industry and commerce mocking the pretensions of land and lineage.

Those mysteries might have revealed themselves to the growing Chamberlain, if he had been sent to Oxford to walk by the slow waters of its unhurried streams, to pace its ancient streets, to talk with young contemporaries of every sort of breeding, to feel himself a part of history and of England. But a narrower parental project kept him at school in his native city and then made him an accountant. Birmingham was still the rim of his horizon, and the intervening space was largely filled with ledger entries. True, his father had by this time passed beyond the city limits of Birmingham. For Joseph

Chamberlain had reached the House of Commons and even sat with Cabinet colleagues upon the Treasury bench. Indeed, he had so far departed from the straight and narrow path of Liberal orthodoxy as to enter on his unsparing struggle against Mr. Gladstone upon the issue of Irish self-government. He was a hero to the Tories now, since the Midland Radical was an unexpected ally, whose cold virulence delighted his new friends and seared his old associates. His interests were widening. He had already learnt that there was an England beyond Warwickshire, and he was now in process of discovering an Empire beyond England.

Indeed, Joseph Chamberlain's wider interests embarked the youthful Neville on a strange adventure. Seized with a sudden (and expensive) faith in the golden prospects of sisal-growing in the Bahamas, the elder Chamberlain took an option on 20,000 acres and exercised it in the form of a large plantation upon Andros, directed by a Bahamian manager and his son Neville. That angular young man was now detached from Birmingham accountancy for some years of agriculture in the tropics, of island schooners dropping in with stores to sell, of thirsty colleagues, of long hours in the plantation store, of stray visits from the local magistrate, of hard work in the raw clearings where his father's sisal was to grow, and of accounts (for he was never to escape from figures altogether) in which 'my cash balanced exactly last night in spite of innumerable entries and cross entries, additions and subtractions, heat, mosquitoes, and crowds of people.'

But the sisal never grew; and Joseph Chamberlain lost about £50,000, while Neville packed his bags and sailed home to Birmingham with more knowledge of

practical realities in a British colony than was possessed

by many orators upon imperial themes.

Then he was back in England and became a Midland manufacturer upon his father's early model. well-marked footsteps led him straight to the Birmingham City Council. But there was no suggestion that these municipal endeavours would be followed by a career in national politics. For the succession to their father's mantle was reserved for his elder brother, Austen. The favoured first-born had passed on from Rugby to Cambridge and, emerging as an urbane political apprentice, served as his father's armour-bearer, entered the House of Commons, earned a chivalrous welcome from Mr. Gladstone, and bore himself in every way as became an heir apparent. The younger Neville was privileged to watch his senior's ascent towards the stars, listening from a distant gallery to his performance at a big political demonstration in the Albert Hall and remarking 'in his pretty way: "It didn't surprise me that you should look so small. What did surprise me was that such a little man should make so much noise." ' He was a trifle envious, perhaps, of Austen's gifts, writing: 'I envy Austen. He sits in an easy chair, reads a chapter or two of a novel, scribbles a note or two, and goes to sleep—and his speech is made!' But though he felt the limitations of his own equipment—and perhaps, indeed, because of them-he knew no envy of his halfbrother's seniority and acquiesced completely in their ageing father's concentration of his political ambitions upon the first-born, 'for whom' (as Austen wrote) 'he was far more ambitious than he had ever been for himself.' For was not Austen Joseph's Joseph?

Neville, however, was apparently content to be a mild, provincial Esau. He scaled the heights of Birming-

ham's Town-Planning Committee; and when their father's disappearance left a vacancy in the Parliamentary seat at West Birmingham which he had rendered famous, Neville frankly pressed it on his elder brother with the argument that there was a 'need for one man at least of the front rank among its members.' So whilst Austen mounted in the scale of national politics, he climbed the unassuming ladder of city government and rose presently to be a war-time Lord Mayor of Birmingham.

But at that point a sudden summons hooked him up to London, entangled him in the impulsive operations of Mr. Lloyd George's Coalition Government, and left him gasping on the bank as Director-General of a newly formed and exceptionally half-baked war-time Ministry of National Service. This sudden variation on the provincial decorum of his administrative habits was most unhappy in its outcome. For it was one thing to grease the wheels of city government at Birmingham in wellbalanced conferences, and quite another to survive the hurly-burly, the conflicting interests, the rudimentary machinery and swift improvisations of St. Ermin's Hotel, Westminster, where the new Ministry of National Service conducted its unequal struggle with the problems of Britain's man-power in time of war. It was a strange administrative jungle, in which few things were what they seemed and all dangerously unlike the comfortable certainties of the City Hall; and presently the new Director-General gave up the unequal struggle and went home to Birmingham.

His post was bound to be unpopular; and his performance left the public unimpressed and Mr. Lloyd George frankly peevish. 'It was not,' as he wrote in later years, 'one of my successful selections.' The war-

time Premier detected signs of 'rigid competency.' But he added tartly that 'such men have their uses in conventional times or in conventional positions, and are indispensable for filling subordinate posts at all times. But they are lost in an emergency or in creative tasks at any time.' Was this altogether just? Mr. Lloyd George in his gayer moments has even been known to draw disparaging conclusions from the small size of Mr. Chamberlain's head. But, at least, an honest haircut enabled Mr. Chamberlain's observers to determine just how small it was-and who could tell the size of Mr. Lloyd George's? But such Celtic and compelling coiffures are not for Midland manufacturers; and neatheaded Mr. Chamberlain was safe in Birmingham once more. Yet not for long. His taste of London life revealed an inclination towards national politics; and he soon found himself elected to the House of Commons in the strange Tory Parliament of 1918, where Maynard Keynes winced at the aspect of the 'hard-faced men who looked as though they had done well out of the War.' He was, of course, a Birmingham member, and his interests were strictly in domestic politics. Austen adventured widely on the international scene; but Neville got no further than the problems once presented to the Chairman of the Town-Planning Committee. He was an orthodox Conservative, whose range was strictly limited. So long as Mr. Lloyd George sat in the seat of power, recollections of St. Ermin's in 1917 would bar the road to office. But when Mr. Bonar Law reigned in his stead, the path was clear for Neville Chamberlain to make his modest début as an officeholder. His first brief appearance was as Postmaster-General; but that was followed by a short spell at the Ministry of Health, for which his grasp of city government appeared to qualify him, and a more sensational promotion to the Treasury. For he became Mr. Baldwin's Chancellor of the Exchequer, although his tenure of the office was too brief for him to hatch a Budget—and a Chancellor without a Budget is as unfinished as a King without a Coronation.

But the Conservatives were soon back in office, and Mr. Chamberlain reverted to the Ministry of Health. His critics found him narrow and a little harsh; but nobody denied that this veteran of local government knew what it was all about. Those were the years in which his brother Austen made a brilliant effort to adjust world affairs in the Locarno Treaties on the basis that a German signature was something that could be relied upon. But Neville Chamberlain was busy crossing swords with Labour on the housing problem. When the money crisis swept the Conservatives to power again in 1931, he was still Health Minister, since local government seemed to be recognized as his speciality. But when the Treasury fell vacant once again, Neville Chamberlain succeeded.

That remained his task from 1931 to 1937, and the effort was congenial. For British finance seemed to stand in need of a strait-jacket; and Neville Chamberlain was an inveterate Budget-balancer. His narrow course was not, perhaps, the direct path to all his fellow-countrymen's affections. But they recognized a tight hand on the reins and reacted to it, each according to his station—Liberals and Socialists into sharp opposition, Conservatives into a recognition of the party's No. 2 and Mr. Baldwin's heir apparent. For it was gradually recognized that Neville Chamberlain supplied what little steel there was in Mr. Baldwin's rather spongy concrete.

His interests were still domestic, though. He had his Budgets to present; and as the years went by, the Treasury was largely unconcerned with storm-clouds in Manchuria and Hitler's rise and Mussolini's growing appetite for other people's property. Such problems properly belonged to Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr. Eden. But they seemed very far away from Mr. Chamberlain, who did his sums and grudged expenditure and got his cash to balance (as in the old Bahamian days) in spite of 'heat, mosquitoes, and crowds of people.'

If he thought of foreign policy at all, he viewed it as an unwelcome interruption of the real business of home politics and social progress (as these were understood by a Birmingham Conservative). So much was apparent from his spontaneous confession that he prayed his own lot might be different from the younger Pitt's—'His interests lay at home in the repair of the financial system and in domestic reforms. But events abroad cut short his ambitions and, reluctantly, after long resisting his fate, he found himself involved in what was up to then the greatest war in our history.' Could there be a fairer summary of the last six years of Neville Chamberlain's career?

The self-comparison with William Pitt may be unduly flattering. Indeed, it moved a disrespectful London commentator at the time to the aphorism that 'there is not very much in common between these two exalted figures except the fact that each of them had a far greater father than himself and both had the gout.' But there can be no question of Mr. Chamberlain's predominant concern with home affairs and the reluctant turn of his attention towards foreign problems and, eventually, war. That process formed the last and most

uncomfortable stage in the education of Neville Chamberlain.

What equipment had his upbringing and experience contributed to qualify him for a right appraisement of the European scene? A gaunt, familiar figure in oldfashioned clothes was soon emerging with a smile that never seemed to change from official automobiles, from the neat front-door of 10 Downing Street, from big aeroplanes at European airports, from the House of Commons, international conferences, and eventually from army headquarters in France. That was the external aspect of Neville Chamberlain which the world learned to know. For we grew quite as used to it as to the other effigies displayed upon the European scene—to Stalin's lamentable headgear, Mussolini's big, bald head and conscientious scowl, or the riding-boots that Hitler wears in order to impress the horse he never mounts. Chamberlain exterior was quite unvarying. Public scenes were uniformly dignified by the stiff collar and sombre costume of a business executive, though he went fishing in a suit of wilder tweeds. His hats, unlike the bold experiments of Mr. Winston Churchill, were unadventurous. But what lay beneath them? That was the enigma with which Neville Chamberlain challenged his contemporaries. The same unwinking pair of rather burning eyes stared out above his slightly obsolescent neckwear. But what lay behind the stare?

If Rugby and Birmingham had taught him anything, he had learnt to tell the truth as he conceived it, to say exactly what he meant (however unpalatable), and to suppose that other men in responsible positions might be counted on to do the same. (New World diplomacy has occasionally cherished the same illusion about the more disreputable elements in world affairs.) The belief

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that other men are capable of being honest is the basis of all commercial enterprise in Birmingham or elsewhere; and Neville Chamberlain's approach to diplomacy was essentially a business man's.

Besides, he shared the strong commercial faith in the value of personal contacts. For an angry customer is always better faced across a table-preferably one with plates and glasses on it. Any business man could tell the Foreign Office that. Interminable correspondence never solved a problem yet; but an hour's private talk has often done the trick that reams of paper failed to do. One condition, though, is requisite. The talk, if time is not to be entirely wasted, must be with the head of the concern. For there is little to be gained by merely captivating his subordinates. It is a sound rule that one should always deal with principals; and if Neville Chamberlain should ever come to take a hand in international affairs, his prejudices and experience both rendered it extremely likely that he would proceed by way of direct discussion with the foreign principals and that he would believe just what they said. After all, he would expect them to accept his word; and, in common fairness, he must do the same by them. That was how business was done in Birmingham and on the City Council.

But was it the Continental way? The discovery that it was not wrote the last chapter of his education. His first appearance on the international scene was a sharp recall to international realities, when he announced in 1936 that any prolongation of the fragmentary Sanctions invoked without success by Mr. Eden and the League of Nations against Italy would be 'the very midsummer of madness.' Here was a flat-footed statement in his father's rather ruthless manner, which

accorded with the public's view of him as a practical business man who had no time for controversies on fine points of principle. That was not, he felt, the way to satisfy the customers; and when shortly afterwards he followed Mr. Baldwin as head of the concern, it was not long before Neville Chamberlain began to take a hand in foreign policy. His first objective was to soothe the ruffled Mussolini; and he attacked the problem by direct and personal approaches and the more surprising method of believing all that Mussolini's agent said. There is an authentic picture of one conversation between Eden, Chamberlain, and an Italian diplomat whose facts were carefully subordinated to his argument. When the door had closed behind him, Mr. Chamberlain remarked on his evident sincerity. But Mr. Eden commented that he had not been telling the whole truth; whereupon the Prime Minister reproached his youthful Foreign Secretary for being 'too suspicious.'

That partnership could not last long; and soon Mr. Eden was relegated to a private station, where the Prime Minister would be undisturbed by his suspicions. If Mr. Chamberlain was right, it should be possible to iron out all current European questions in a few personal encounters and then get back to local problems in a happy world where there would be no more foreign politics to bother Englishmen. That was his simpleminded (and not ignoble) aspiration. But events moved too fast for it; and possibly the other parties to his conversations were not quite so truthful as he had expected.

His first interview with a Continental celebrity took place in slightly unfavourable circumstances at Berchtesgaden in September, 1938. He believed, at this stage, that Hitler told the truth. He still thought so, when he

met him for a second time at Godesberg and was assured 'with great earnestness . . . that this was the last of his territorial ambitions in Europe, and that he had no wish to include in the Reich people of other races than German.' In that belief he went to Munich; and since the proffered treaty did not seem to depart too grossly from these professions, he accepted it—but not without accelerating his own country's programme of defence. For the dawn of a suspicion had begun to creep on his reluctant mind that things in Bavaria might not be what they seemed in Birmingham.

Suspicion deepened to horrified distrust a few months later, as the German signatory of the Munich Diktat tore up his own treaty and destroyed Czechoslovakia by summary invasion in time of peace. That left a disillusioned gentleman inquiring angrily, 'Is this the end of an old venture, or is it the beginning of a new?" and warning plainly that if European liberty was really challenged, the challenger would have to fight Great Britain. From that moment in March, 1939, it was quite plain to Mr. Chamberlain that business methods had failed to settle Europe's problems and that international affairs must be conducted upon different lines from those customary in orderly society, so long as persons of the character prevailing on the Continent continued to appear in major rôles. His education, which had been a long (and possibly a costly) process, was complete.

THE FIRST UNCLE SAM V.S. Pritchett

N THAT AGITATED battlepiece, the panorama of English history from the time of the French Revolution to the Reform Bill, the huge, plain blunt person of William Cobbett stands like a figure drawn out of scale. You imagine one of Morland's farmers appearing in a Whig drawing-room to tell the age of sensibility, with a truculent twinkle in his eye, that there is no sight to beat a good field of swedes; or going down on horseback into his native Hampshire to tell the people who grow swedes that they are being swindled by the men in the Whig drawing-rooms.

Yet it is a mistake to fix a single picture of Cobbett in the mind, though his nature has strict limits; taste and sensibility, for example, are not his strong points. But, making this allowance, there is a large number of jostling personalities in that country suit. There is the steamrolling pamphleteer, the turbulent member of Parliament, the hectoring ex-sergeant-major, the downright husband. He is as mild as cheddar, telling one how to keep geese, brew beer or make gardening succeed. He is the painstaking cottage financier giving detailed instructions about the fine art of living within your income. The next moment he is the stubborn but insolvent

patriot, the hectic revolutionary whose rage, however, does not recall the hate of Danton but the native fulmination of some apoplectic Tory squire. It is this variousness of Cobbett, so that he is like a riotous fugue made by human nature out of a plain theme, which distinguishes him from his contemporaries. The great figures of the period from Pitt, Napoleon and Robespierre down to Cobbett's own very important invention Mr. Muckworm, the financier, are personages in the transcendent drama of Napoleonic Europe. They have designed the fate of the continent. And Cobbett has done nothing like that. Yet as a man he dwarfs them simply by being a man when they are personages. You look at the gallery of still, painted portraits and suddenly his image moves, his mouth opens and he speaks. And while he speaks, far greater men than he wilt before the voice of the large plain egotist. Perhaps he is an English phenomenon. A generation before, in a similar way, the voice of Dr. Johnson booms until the whole eighteenth-century is put to silence.

The attraction of Cobbett, especially when we consider the close parallel of the Napoleonic period with our own, is that he is an example of the untutored political force which is always forgotten by political theorists. He is human nature itself which, in moments of crisis, somehow manages to be on both sides of the fence. Consider first the closeness of the parallel of his time with our own. Under Pitt we were fighting for the Old Order against Napoleon's New Order. We fought to defeat a foreign imperialist and world conqueror who overran all Europe and, in so doing, we killed the Old Order we were defending, and any immediate possibility of a new one, whether Napoleon's or our own. A new and better Europe did eventually arise, but after what starvation

and cruel repression! And how much of Napoleonic Europe really survived! The struggle with Napoleon put back the clock of reform in England more than thirty years and, looking back on history, we cannot but note that the Terror-about which we were so morally indignant-was short and kind when we compare it with the long-drawn-out misery of English life until the Reform Bill. Even then the Reform emancipated only the middle classes and left the rest to face 'the hungry forties'. History does not perhaps supply us with other than misleading lessons; but in the Napoleonic period there is a fascinating commentary. It was a time, we conclude, when all the leaders were in equivocal positions, the Jacobins no less than the Tories. It was a time when people snatched at 'lesser evils' with which to cover their nakedness, and these 'lesser evils', like shirts cut too short, expose regions which are irresistible to the unbenevolent eye of the party enemy. Cobbett is no less vulnerable than the rest but he had the art of giving his one-sidedness an air of independent commonsense.

Cobbett has been a gift to English essayists and biographers who have a bee in their bonnets. His most instructive biographer, Mr. G. D. H. Cole, is nagged throughout a very well-documented book by the idea that Cobbett was a socialist who failed. His Cobbett is an emotional radical, the showman of Reform who brings revolt to every humble hearth in England, and then fails the majority who look to him for leadership. Mr. Cole is quite clear about this. Of course, Cobbett was a countryman who did not understand the new industrial working class, who indeed hated both industrialism and the new financial order which came in after the Napoleonic Wars. One has only to read his

Paper Against Gold. Containing the History and Mystery of The Bank of England, the Funds, the Debt, the Sinking Fund, the Bank Stoppage, the lowering and the raising of the value of Paper Money; and shewing that Taxation, Pauperism, Poverty, Misery and Crimes have all increased and ever must increase with a Funding System, which was written just after Waterloo, to see that Cobbett understood and hated the new finance capitalism which has lasted until Hitler and the present war between them knocked it on the head.

An alternative view of Cobbett was provided by G. K. Chesterton. Cobbett is again the English radical, a sort of thick-skinned John Bull who loathes the New Dawn as much as G. K. Chesterton loathed it and who stands for the good old times. Cobbett is seen as a human symbol of the English nature undergoing the martyrdom of being turned from countryman into townsman, shouting to go forward and to go backward at the same time.

There is a good deal of truth in these portraits, and it is the irony of Cobbett's career that he won reform not for the poor of the towns or the countryside but for the new genteel, the clerk, the shopkeeper, for all the David Copperfields of the nineteenth-century whose passion for going up in the world and keeping a servant always enraged the John Bull of Botley, Hants. But to think of Cobbett as a survival and 'the last John Bull' is only half true and leaves out something of overwhelming importance in his character. Cobbett is not old. He is new. He is as new in his own time (and as isolated, of course) as Defoe was in an earlier century of enormous social change. Cobbett was the product of a revolution which had nothing to do with the pros and cons of Jacobinism. He was the product of the true English revolution of the period, the revolution which

pre-dated the fall of the Bastille and which took place in America. He was not the last John Bull of the eighteenth-century; he was really the new John Bull made in the United States. I am not sure that he isn't the first Uncle Sam.

No biographer of course ignores the fact that Cobbett spent the greater part of the first 15 years of his adult life in the United States; but all seem to have been so hypnotised by the fact that he was a violent, anti-American Tory during his residence there that they have failed to note how American he had become. Cobbett had attacked emigration on patriotic and economic grounds, hating to see that misery and the English class system were driving Englishmen out of England. He returned from the United States the complete emancipated emigrant. Where on earth would Cobbett have been if he had not emigrated? We would never have heard of him. An obscure sergeant-major who had taught himself to read and write, and had naïvely put this useful accomplishment to the fatal task of exposing the peculations and incompetence of the officers of his regiment, was as good as damned. The officers were whitewashed and Cobbett, as so often was to happen in his career, was obliged to run away from the hornet's nest he had stirred up. No, Cobbett had no chance here. In America there were liberty, equality and fraternity—well, not the last; Cobbett was never exactly fraternal—there was money. When Cobbett returned to England he had a name, he was a successful man in business and in pamphleteering. But equally important, for a born countryman, there were freedom, opportunity and space. The country life of England was beginning its long death agony. Taxed by church and state, small and choked by traditions, the English farms

were dying; the American farmers were free. They lived. In his Advice to Young Men there is a passage in which he confesses to a love affair with a country girl in Nova Scotia, an affair which he was too cautious to bring to a head, so that when he left without the lady he was justly charged with having deluded her. He intends to describe the affair with complete honesty. what emerges? That he was in love with a girl? Not at all. It was the land, the farm she lived on, the life, which had caught his passion. He saw in the new life of America and not in the old life of eighteenth-century England, the land as he longed for it to be. Cobbett was incapable of abstract thought. He was convinced only by what he saw with his own eyes. Where the English reformers and early socialists had laid it down, after long abstraction, that a man's labour itself is property, Cobbett had seen this to be an established fact in America. The emigrant's labour, to the shrewd, active and industrious anyway, became his property with no squire nor tithe-eating priest to rob him. Cobbett was to fight against financier's taxes not like a native squire but like an American rebel.

When Cobbett wrote down the things which are fundamental to a good life, independence, he said, was the first essential. And when he wrote of manners he was opposed to the artificial tradition of the courts, but said simply that he wished 'every English youth could see those of the United States: always civil, never servile'. (If he himself was servile, it must be said that he was often pretty uncivil.) And if the American stamp is clear on the soberer side of his life, it is even clearer on the extravagant side. There is a sentence in Cottage Economy, in the section on 'How to Keep Geese' in which, like some dry-voiced Yankee, he says 'The

reader will be apt to exclaim as my friends very often do, "that Mr. Cobbett's geese are all swans". Well, better that way than not to be pleased with what one has,' There is no English diffidence in him. (Incidentally, his handbooks on gardening, small holding, etc., are still very readable and useful. They are as sound as the latest booklets, a good deal more to the point and they never skimp instruction. When Cobbett tells you how to plant an apple tree you feel his hand on your own, guiding and advising on every detail.) His own financial history, his speculative instinct, the huge 'indemnity'—it was £,10,000—he demanded when he was asked to stand for Oldham at the end of his career, have a transatlantic air. And it was a typical piece of American showmanship to come back home, like some self-advertising hot-gospeller, with the bones of Tom Paine, of whom he was not a follower, proposing to take them on a triumphal tour of England. It was even more American to abandon this fantastic publicity stunt the moment he saw it would flop and fail to pay. The less John Bull, the more Uncle Sam he seems as we study these crucial years of his life, and his very hankering after the old and his dislike of the new in England are the emotions of the colonist whose sentiments stand still while he is engrossed in building the externals of a new life.

You cannot escape from the American stamp of Cobbett's character; it is one of the explanations of his failure to grasp the real English situation and of the fact that he has had no successors in English life. More important still, the Americanism of Cobbett prevents any possibility of imagining that he foreshadowed that degraded individualist who is always lurking in G. K. Chesterton's discussions: the little man. Instead of a

procession of Cobbetts we have been provided, by the mean sly enterprise of suburban conservatism, with these nasty little Napoleons. Some attempt has been made to give these slaves a touch of Cobbett's doggedness, and in the hands of Mr. H. G. Wells there are a number of these petty bourgeois heroes who make a bit of a buzz like horse flies under the swatter. If their 'heroism' is a delusion, their pathos is embarrassing; for the evident fact is that, unlike the example they might have followed, they lack both character and anything like Cobbett's knowledge of liberty. To have lost America, to have rejected the French revolution, to have checked reform and in exchange to have got 'the little man'—what a bargain! There are of course in the work of Mr. H. G. Wells many examples of the petty bourgeois conception of liberty; and what is it but some imaginative thing, a fantasy, a ridiculous cocky little dream about being a little tin god in a bowler hat? That dream does not come to those who, like Cobbett, have the habit of liberty kept loose in the shoulders and in the mind. Nor does this dream liberty, depending as it always does in Mr. H. G. Wells on strokes of luck, sudden winnings and magic, seem to be a moral conception.

The books of Cobbett which we read to-day are, I suppose, first The Rural Rides, then Advice to Young Men, Cottage Economy and The Grammar of the English Language, the most readable grammar ever written. We should also, as I have said, read his handbooks, and his pamphlets for the art of indictment. But what are we reading for? For his character. It is Cobbett's original achievement not only to have drawn his own portrait well, but to have made the least sympathetic of all types of character absorbingly attractive. For he is an egotist of the toughest hide. Of the regions of sensibility, imagina-

tion and passion he is at a loss. What poetry is in him is of the commonplace. He is almost without power of self-criticism, certainly he is not self-curious. On the contrary, he takes it for granted that the curiosity is yours and that you are curious not because he is interesting, but because you will obtain a moral profit by the acquaintance. Cobbett has no doubt that he is always right. His books, he tells you with that shrewd, hard twinkle, are the most famous in the world and the best of their kind. He has worked harder, he says, than any man on earth. He has, he says, enormous talents and they did not come down from Heaven; on the contrary, they were developed by his own efforts, by will, industry, self-discipline and sacrifice. There is only one method of writing: the Cobbett method. Squeamish authors complain they must have solitude and silence, but Cobbett tells you he has written his greatest works in snatches while the house was full of screaming babies. He is loud about the virtues of early rising. He is one of those men who believe that good health is a virtue in itself, a testimony to sober habits. He is even an expert on eating. He spends less time over his meals than any other man and for two years had a mutton chop for lunch every day and never got tired of it. Incidentally, he always shaves in cold water, and no woman, he boasts, ever had a more considerate, sensible and excellent husband.

As he draws himself, Cobbett is an appalling character. One is not surprised that the sons of so powerful an egotist were mediocrities crushed by the vehement perfections of their father. And yet, as we read, he does not strike us as appalling. The explanation is that in those hundred and one autobiographical touches which he will work into an attack on paper

money, a lecture on keeping your accounts, marrying your wife, or farming fifty acres, he is entirely unselfconscious, entirely without priggishness. Cobbett is always right, but he is not self-righteous. He lays down the law but he is never censorious. If he is always in the right, he never puts you in the wrong. (The truth is that he is not interested in you, doesn't know you exist.) His is the easy portrait of a natural man of high vitality. The great experience of his life was the one he had when he joined the army: the discovery, made after years of hard effort, of how to write English so that he would pour out the pleasure of having a pugnacious, extrovert and independent nature. Compared to Defoe, who holds so similar a position as a pamphleteer, Cobbett has the advantage of a good conscience. It is as good as his health. He is consistent in his contradictions. An inveterate traveller, he curses the restlessness of the age as if he had never budged from his own doorstep. Uprooted from his class and country, he angrily assures us that the evil of the age lies in the number of people who think themselves risen above their origins. The sublime inconsistency of it all fills us with admiration.

It has been said that Cobbett was something of a fraud. There are dubious moments in his career. A plainspoken man is not necessarily a truth-speaking man, nor a plain dealer a straight dealer. Cobbett frequently made his peace with authority. He backed down from the full radical programme. He argued for independence, made money, but thought that the demands of the labourer should be modest. It is difficult for any man in public life to practise the frugality he preaches. But men who lived at his time frequently found themselves in equivocal situations. They lived, as we do, in the past, present and future at once. And

there was nothing dubious in his love of country, though it is thought he was paid rather well for loving it when he was in America. One cannot doubt that it was the passionate feeling of this patriotism, intensified by the moral feeling for liberty he had got in America, which enabled him to bring his demand for social justice so forcibly to the homes of simple people and which gave him his enormous influence. When the tradition of love of country was beglamoured by the learned and debased by people who identified it with their financial interests, it was natural that Cobbett's successors in the fight for social justice should belittle patriotism. Cobbett had no illusions about the patriotism of the new finance -capitalism; but he did not make the mistake of confusing love of country with nationalism and flagwaving. And being immune to the seductions of abstract thinking, he did not have the delusion, so recently popular with us, that love of country could or ought to be demonstrated away.

LORD FRED THE CRICKETER Harold Hobson

F HE IS the most famous cricketer of his age, he is also almost a stranger in his own vicarage. He has come down on one of his rare visits to his neglected church at Redbourn only because the wedding whose details are being arranged is that of the daughter of one of the wealthiest of his parishioners. For anyone else the half-starved curate he has put in charge would be good enough. His dog yaps at his heels. (A remarkable animal, that dog; honoured above all other dogs: a dog much given to the contemplation of cricket: the only nineteenth-century dog allowed into the Pavilion at Lord's.) But his master has no attention to spare for him. He is in one of his frequent rages, his normally pale and puffy face red with anger. As his carriage rolled across the village common, some darkfaced and filthy labourer had failed to touch his forelock. Why, he storms at the alarmed curate, are the inhabitants of Redbourn so uncouth? Why, in God's name, is the church itself so dilapidated? Does no one care for the comfort of the Gospel in this Beelzebub-ridden village? polistic holdings in the railway boom. The very thought of such things rebukes the angry clergyman; his assurance vanishes, he seems to shrink. He is the son of a duke; a descendant of Nell Gwynn; the husband of the daughter of a viscount; he is a Doctor of Divinity; he has scored nine centuries at Lord's. But he has no confidence in himself, no ease. He is more nervous than the wretched curate himself. Such scenes as this were repeated on several occasions between 1827, when Lord Frederick Beauclerk became vicar of Redbourn, and 1850, when he died in Grosvenor Street.

There are innumerable ways in which the soul may be saved. A voice heard whilst playing tipcat has before now proved efficacious; so has the love of a good woman. I should hesitate to suggest, however, that any such salvation came to Lord Frederick Beauclerk. Probably he was uninterested in questions of that kind; they may have savoured to him of the enthusiasm of that Methodist heresy which nearly disrupted the Church during his schooldays. But if it is unknown what force (or whether any force at all) guaranteed his eternal happiness, there is no doubt what it was that made his days here on earth endurable, and even pleasant. was cricket: playing cricket until he was too old to play any more—and his average did not drop until he was over fifty: and after that, sitting in the Pavilion at Lord's, and lamenting the decline in the game since the days of Beldham and Ward and Budd.

Elsewhere, life and his own nature seem fitted to have given him only little satisfaction. Yet I admit that it is with no certainty that he can be rescued out of the jaws of oblivion. Such records as exist of him are both scanty and scattered. The notorious but lively Harriette Wilson, whose maintenance depleted the bank reserves

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of half the noble houses of England, has a few halffriendly, half-contemptuous, and probably wholly unreliable words about him. The Reverend John Mitford, at the end of a book review in the Gentleman's Magazine, broods for a paragraph over his past greatness on the cricket field. For a moment here and there the Reverend James Pycroft accords him the benefit of commendation. His scores are sepulchred in Lillywhite. In the registers of Cambridge University the dates of his matriculation, of his ordination and preferments are recorded. that, very possibly, is all. Whatever else he did, or thought, or felt, whatever ambitions troubled him, in his seventy-seven years of life, during which England lost America, defeated Napoleon, reformed itself, and began the building of a second empire, must be guessed at or deduced, by the dangerous process of unverifiable reasoning, from the few facts contained, as a side issue only, in these works.

BEAUGLERK WAS a man of the most violent temper. At any moment, in a fit of anger, he would dash his hat upon the ground, or express himself with a more than Biblical frankness. He was dictatorial by nature, yet without the power, in ordinary surroundings, to dictate effectively. His profession was the Church, but he had no vocation for it. Occasionally, indeed, his conduct was remarked upon, by his more zealous fellow-religionists, as a public scandal. When, on June 18, 1810, he led an eleven of Surrey against an eleven of All England, for the sum of one thousand guineas aside, a broadside was issued in agitated condemnation of this 'clerical exhibition.' He had an eye for pretty women,

but apparently little skill in commending himself to their favour. In a way he was gallant enough, and once continued to play with a broken finger, neglecting it so obstinately that he only just escaped serious consequences. But by nature he was timid, and, when at Nottingham, would have fled from the field as the crowd bore down upon him, had not his friend Ward assured him that their motive was not to do him harm but only to see what manner of man so astonishing a batsman could be. He sought the society of Harriette Wilson, but was elbowed on to the fringes of the crush that surrounded her carriage in Hyde Park, soliciting her attention without much success. She laughed at him a little, not entirely in secret, teased him a good deal, and called him 'Fred Diamond Eye,' and 'the little parson.' These things do not suggest, I think, a happy man, or a welladjusted nature.

Fortunately it is not a complete portrait. misses out his constant appearances, during a period of more than thirty years, on the cricket pitches of southern England. I say southern England deliberately, and not merely because he played only rarely north of Oxford. He knew working men, farm labourers, potters, innkeepers. He chose them for the elevens which it was his delight to build up; and no doubt he got along with them pretty well. But they were the working men of the south, upon whom the spirit of feudalism still breathed, making easy their association with the offspring of a ducal house. The rougher, more rebellious working men of the north, spawned by industry out of grimy factories, angrily demanding their rights and representation in Parliament, he never knew; and if he had known them, it is unlikely that he would have liked them.

But at Lord's, or on Bullingdon Common, or at Stoke

Down, in the same Hampshire where he was Lord of the Manor of Winchfield, Beauclerk came into his own. It was on these fields that he found that honour which the self-respect of all men, especially perhaps the dishonourable, demands for their inward peace. His nervousness dropped from him. He showed his defiance of the bowlers by hanging a gold watch from the bails. As a bowler himself, he never lost his length. Throughout the land he was renowned for his 'generalship.' Not even Wellington deployed his men with greater skill than Beauclerk. So did his anxieties slide from him when he stepped upon the cricket field, that he could meet even an implied criticism with a light heart. 'Wouldn't it be a good thing to have a change?' asked one of his colleagues once when he had been bowling rather a long time with little effect. 'Yes, it would,' replied Beauclerk cheerfully. 'I'll change ends.' But cricket did more than give him happiness, and provide a sphere of activity in which his personality could develop itself. It brought out in him in one respect a certain moral quality; it showed him-what we should not otherwise have suspected—to be a man of character.

Some time in the late nineteen-twenties I went to a cricket match on the bleak and blasted heath of Bramall Lane, Sheffield, in which Wilfrid Rhodes was playing. It happened to be the first county game in which Yorkshire was concerned after it had been announced that Rhodes had been dropped from the next Test team to oppose Australia. Sheffield people are not normally a sentimental or demonstrative section of the community. But many people on the chill and forbidding ground that day felt it hard that so great a cricketer, a young man no more, after so long and honourable a career, the hero of many centuries, should be discarded

as he approached his own fifty, and when he came out to bat the spectators stood at attention. Such tributes as this are not paid—at least in Yorkshire—merely in recognition of technical accomplishment. This unrehearsed and unconcerted incident meant that the people of Sheffield not only admired Rhodes as a cricketer but respected him as a man. They may have known very little about him personally. Nevertheless, having seen him in every kind of situation during more than a quarter of a century of cricket, they had divined in him those dour and grim qualities of determination and grit that Yorkshiremen especially value.

One would not say as a superficial judgment that Beauclerk possessed those qualities. On the moral side he was no rival of the Chevalier Bayard; Galahad would have found in him no intolerable competition. On the cricket field itself, Beauclerk's conduct, brilliant as it was, raising him to the highest pinnacle of sporting fame, often requires a leniency of estimate. When the run of the game went against him he was not above bribing the scorer to suppress the result. He boasted of making £600 a year out of cricket in tones that suggest quickness of wit as well as slickness of the wrist. He stretched the rules of the game as far as they would go. In 1806, playing for the M.C.C. at Woolwich, he took the unprecedented step of rubbing his hands in sawdust in order to get a better grip on the ball. There was nothing wrong in this, but it had never been done before, and his opponents resented his habit of always fiddling about with new ideas and fresh tricks. They were particularly angry when, on one occasion, he knocked off the bails at the bowler's end because the impatient batsman had left his crease. It is to be noted here that in these matters Beauclerk's behaviour is

quite in accord with modern practice. He was a pioneer. At the same time one can have some sympathy with those of his contemporaries who felt that Beauclerk neither understood nor exemplified the spirit of cricket.

Yet, as I say, in one respect that may easily be over-looked, Beauclerk gives evidence of being a cricketer of character. From the end of the season of 1791, when he was eighteen years old, until the beginning of the season of 1795, when he was twenty-two, Beauclerk played no first-class cricket. What was he doing during these four years? Let us look at the matter rather more closely.

Part of the time he was at Cambridge. He entered Trinity College on May 26, 1790, and took his Master's degree in the Easter term of 1792. There is no direct evidence available about his activities at Trinity, though the general life of the college during the particular years of his residence is well-known, for Henry Gunning recorded in great detail all the undergraduate gossip of the time. It was a time of quarrels and political excitement, of riots against the Dissenters and of the burning of Tom Paine's effigy on Market Hill. The men of Trinity, who prided themselves on writing better Latin verses than those of St. John's, were a brilliant but irresponsible set, equally likely to become Senior Wranglers or to be found dead drunk on the morning of the examinations. Many a party that Beauclerk attended in the rooms of his friends broke up in disorder, with challenges whistling through the air, challenges which, however, were usually withdrawn the next morning.

It was the habit of the wealthier men in Trinity to hold dinners at Bourn Bridge, followed by whist and dancing. They were noisy and drunken affairs, and at one during Beauclerk's residence a member of the party became troublesome, and was locked in a bedroom. In his drunken anger he flung himself out of the window, and fell thirty feet to the ground. His friends rushed out, expecting to find him dead. To their surprise he had not even a bone broken. With true Cambridge zeal for experiment they begged him to do it again, but he ungraciously refused. In these rowdy surroundings it is improbable that Beauclerk devoted himself with much thoroughness to academic study.

He was, however, subjected to gentler influences. He knew a certain Armitage, famous throughout the university as so gay a creature that, as Gunning remarks, he 'would enjoy a hearty laugh even on a Sunday.' He was in daily contact with Samuel Ogden, Professor of Geology, and perhaps imbibed some of the grace of manner that enabled that gentleman to combine absolute truthfulness with perfect courtesy. When Ogden was once asked by his hostess what he thought of a dish of ruffs and reeves (rather underdone), he replied, 'They are admirable, Madam—raw; what must they have been had they been roasted.'

This atmosphere, and these people, moulded Beauclerk's character at an impressionable age. He saw that men around him who had no particular inclination to any other profession usually went into the Church. No especial knowledge or bent of study was asked of them. Only one theological question was at that time put to Oxford graduates when they entered the Church. Cambridge asked none at all. When James Blackburn, Beauclerk's contemporary at Trinity, applied for ordination, the Archbishop of York did indeed hint that when he came to assume Priest's orders it would be well if it was found that he had employed the interval in studying

Divinity. Blackburn brusquely put the matter into perspective by saying that since his degree he had been engaged in more important branches of learning.

It is impossible to imagine that Beauclerk, who took deacon's orders at Norwich in 1795, applied himself with a very devoted heart to the study of theology. There is nothing in his later life to suggest that he took religion very seriously; and even if there were, there is nothing to indicate that Cambridge would have sympathised with him. We can feel pretty certain that neither his degree nor his ordination exhausted Beauclerk's attention between 1791 and 1795. There must have been other, more effective, absorptions. What were they?

Let us return for a moment to Wilfrid Rhodes. Rhodes was not only one of the greatest slow bowlers of all time: he was one of the greatest batsmen. He not only during a considerable part of his career went in first for Yorkshire. He went in first for England. Yet he was not a natural batsman. He was not one of those players whose strokes come with the ease of an innate and infallible mastery. When he first played cricket his batting was so feeble that his appearance closed the innings. His later skill was the result of incessant practice, of sheer determination to excel, and every century was a demonstration of character.

Something of the same sort may perhaps be said of Beauclerk. His first important game was played for the Marylebone Cricket Club on June 2 and 3, 1791, against Kent. The M.C.C. had only recently been formed. During the earliest years of Beauclerk's life the honour of cricket was chiefly upheld by the villagers of Hambledon. But by 1785, when he was about twelve years old, it was already becoming evident that the centre of gravity of the sport was moving from Hampshire to London.

In that year a regular club used to play in the White Conduit Fields at Islington, belonging to the inn of that name. In 1786 two members of the team, the Earl of Winchelsea and Charles Lennox, later Duke of Richmond, led a movement for getting a more private ground. They proposed to a ground bowler of the White Conduit Club, called Thomas Lord, that he should open a private playing pitch. This he did, in 1787, at Dorset Square. A year later the White Conduit Club became the Marylebone Cricket Club, and issued a revised and official version of the laws of cricket. The M.C.C. rapidly became recognised as the game's supreme and unchallenged authority. Such was its status when Beauclerk, in nankeen breeches and silk stockings, first appeared in its eleven at Dorset Square.

The match was won, and won in no small measure owing to Beauclerk's exertions. Though only eighteen years old he gave rich promise of his enormous bowling achievements of the future. He remained always a bowler of impeccable length. No player was so clever as he at sending down those probing deliveries which expose a man's hidden weaknesses, and at exploiting them once found. But in his earlier seasons his bowling had a nip up from the pitch, totally unexpected in bowling that looked slow, 'home and easy' stuff, which it lost after Hammond the wicket keeper, in one memorable game, jumped down the pitch to drive the ball as though it were a half-volley. That drive of Hammond's whistled past Beauclerk's ear so fiercely that he never afterwards recovered his nerve. It was a drive of critical importance in the history of cricket, for it ended the period of dominance enjoyed by slow bowling from about the time of Beauclerk's first match against Kent. In that match the M.C.C., in its single innings, scored 240 runs, whilst Kent made 39 and 88. In Kent's first innings Beauclerk clean bowled the Earl of Darnley and Aylward, and in the second took the wicket of Amherst and caught out the Honourable E. Bligh. But as a batsman he was an unqualified failure. He scored precisely nothing.

He appeared for the M.C.C. in only one more game that season. This match was lost by 100 and 147 against 84 and 208. In the first innings Beauclerk again failed to score, but in the second made six not out. His record as a batsman for his first season was therefore three innings, once not out, with a highest score of six not out, a total of six, and an average of three. It is not surprising that W. G. Grace observed that he 'gave no promise . . . of the skill which attracted the cricketing public a few years later.' Certainly no one watching him in these two games would have guessed that they had seen the début of a batsman whom Lillywhite estimated to have achieved, at the end of his career, he highest average ever recorded in first-class cricket. Yet when Beauclerk, after an absence of four years. again appeared for the M.C.C., he showed so immense an improvement that he was soon going in first wicket, and in 1796 scored his first century. One may conclude that between 1791 and 1795 Beauclerk paralleled and preceded the great achievement of Rhodes: that by unremitting application he made himself one of the finest batsmen of his day and of all time.

BEAUGLERK'S GRICKET does not seem to have interfered with his preferment, nor his preferment with his cricket. In 1797 he was ordained priest, and became

vicar of Kimpton in Hertfordshire. In the same year he played thirty-one innings in first-class cricket, the highest number ever recorded of him, and scored 750 runs, considerably his highest total for one season, for an average of more than 26. Thereafter he played with consistent regularity every season until 1811, when, for some unknown reason, he made no first-class appearances whatever. In 1812 he played only twice, and in 1813 four times. Perhaps about this time other, and temporarily even more compelling interests, came into his life. At any rate, what is known is that on July 3, 1813, he married Charlotte, daughter of Charles, Viscount Dillon. In the next few years he resumed his cricket on a constantly increasing scale, but it never afterwards played quite so large a part in his life as it had done hitherto.

It was in 1827, when he was fifty-four years of age, that he became vicar both of St. Michael's, St. Albans, and of Redbourn. There is little ground for assuming that he was a vital force in the religious life of Redbourn, where he put in a curate. He probably paid him very little, having before him the example of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield, who gave a curate £50 a year for

looking after a benefice that was worth £1000.

Beauclerk should not be judged too hastily in this matter of the curate. It was a settled principle of public life in England then to take the salary and let the work go elsewhere. He was not in the least unusual in holding more than one benefice. He was not singular in being a pluralist, and he met with little criticism for appearing in Redbourn only on the occasion of important marriages and christenings. He fitted into that aristocratic tradition of neglect of their charges by the parsons of Redbourn whose effects persisted, it is said, into the early years of the present century.

This neglect manifested itself in the decay that entered into the massive fabric of the Redbourn church, as well as in the crusty and isolated character of the Redbourn people. Not until 1915, when the present vicar, the Reverend Henry W. Berry, was inducted, did the church begin to recover the fine and well-cared for appearance which it now shows to the world. As for the people, if a man thirty years ago entered a house in St. Albans without removing his hat, or if he failed to wipe his boots, or if he left the door open, he would be greeted with the remark, 'I see you come from Redbourn.' This state of affairs seems to be the principal, though remote, consequence of Lord Frederick's conception of his spiritual obligations to his flock.

During all these years of cricket and religion Beauclerk was constantly to be seen in London, hovering on the fringes of that society which was half-aristocratic, half-demi-mondaine, and wholly raffish. Yet I cannot believe that he ever became at home in the hard-eating, hard-drinking, hard-whoring set that established the social tone of the Regency. I cannot believe he had much occasion for the anti-bilious pills, then so copiously advertised to restore tone to 'a debilitated stomach. whether arising from the acrimony of the redundant bile, intemperate diet, or excessive drinking.' I cannot believe that his table behaviour remotely resembled that of the Duke of Norfolk, whose eyes, when he was at the board, would sparkle, his hands flashing to and fro. his elbows jumping up and down, his mouth furiously slobbering. I do not believe that he took part in many adventures like that of Lord Ponsonby, who hid himself behind curtains, while Amy Wilson, Harriette's sister, undressed, and 'made use of every convenience in (the) bedroom without delicacy or ceremony.' I do not

believe these things simply because they imply a way of life which is incompatible with the physical efficiency over a long period of years that Beauclerk manifested as a cricketer.

I remain unshaken even by the famous story that Harriette Wilson tells of him about the mistress of Wellington's brother.

Fred Beauclerk is a sly, shy, odd man (says Harriette), not very communicative, unless one talks about cricket. I remember when the Marquess of Wellesley did me the honour to call on me and tell me what a great man he was, and how much he had been talked of in the world—how often carried on men's shoulders, with other reminiscences of equal interest, Fred Beauclerk the Diamond Eye, cut me for Moll Raffles. I accused him of it, laughing, and he, laughingly, acknowledged the intrigue.

'I could not endure the idea of your receiving that vain

old fool, Lord Wellesley,' said Beauclerk.

'No harm, believe me,' I replied. 'Mere curiosity induced me to have the man up, to see if he was like his brother; but you are very welcome to Mrs. Raffles; she'll make an excellent wife to a divine. Not that I know or care anything about the lady!'

'And what think you of Wellesley?' said the little parson.

'Why, I suppose I must either say he is clever and brilliant, or be called a fool myself; so, instead of answering your question, I'll tell you what he says to me to-morrow, after I shall have acquainted him with your intrigue with his belle amie Raffles.'

'You are not serious?' said the good clergyman in a great fright.

'Yes, I am quite serious, I assure you.'

'What! You spoil sport! You make mischief! I would not have believed this of you!'

'You only do me justice,—but I will tell, notwithstanding: and if I either spoil your intrigue. or do mischief to anybody except the noble Marquess, never forgive me.'

'I never will,' said Beauclerk, seriously, and so we parted.

During the thirty years of Beauclerk's eminence the cricketing world of Britain was dominated by professionals. Beauclerk himself was the only amateur who was chosen to appear for All England on the strength of his play alone, irrespective of the circumstance that he was the fourth son of the fifth Duke of St. Albans. The inferiority of the amateurs was ascribed to the fact that their various activities prevented their achieving the constant practice and the impeccable condition of the professionals. Beauclerk did achieve this condition: he did put in this constancy of practice. He could have done neither had he lived as Harriette Wilson implies.

THE SIMPLE TRUTH is that Beauclerk was probably the greatest batsman who ever stepped upon a cricket field before the days of Grace. No one knew so much as Fred Lillywhite about the statistical records of the earliest masters of cricket, and Lillywhite, as we have seen, thought Beauclerk's average the highest ever achieved. What that average was, Lillywhite did not determine. So far as I am aware, no one has since repaired his omission. I would hesitate to say that I have repaired it myself, recognising that the odds against any argument being correct which is based upon figures of my own compilation are as Betelgeuse to a speck of dust. This being so, I venture to say that I am under the impression—I dare put it no more strongly—that between 1791, when he was eighteen, and 1823, when he was fifty, Beauclerk played 353 innings, was 35 times not out, and scored 8822 runs for an average of 27. His highest score—170—was made in 1806, a season when he scored 590 runs for an average of 28. His best seasons were 1803, when he scored 646 runs for an average of 64, and 1805, when he made 688 for an average of 62. He played for the All England eleven forty-six times between 1796 and 1823. His highest score in these games was 102 not out in 1805. Altogether he played eighty-five innings for England, was not out five times, and scored a total of 1558 runs for an average of 20. It should be remembered that the pitches he played on were almost totally unprepared.

Such was Beauclerk's record. His average in all first-class matches over a period of more than thirty years was only twelve short of that of Grace himself. On the strength of a general impression of his play, and not as the result of mathematical computation, Beagley and Caldecourt—shadows now, but men of judgment in their day—supposed Beauclerk to have been the finest batsman ever known in England. Pycroft demurred, estimating E. H. Budd at a higher level. He declared that Budd had the higher average, without, I believe, knowing accurately the averages of either. Lillywhite, as we have seen, gives no support to the statistical side of Pycroft's argument. Pycroft himself admits that in style Budd was distinctly the inferior player.

My own impression is that if, out of the long roll of English cricket, two batsmen were chosen to fill the first class with Grace and Ranjitsinhji, their names would be Beauclerk and Beldham; and that Beauclerk would not be the lowest of the quartet. Beldham, most illustrious of the Hambledon professionals, when an old man, told Pycroft that for thirteen years he averaged forty-three runs a match, though frequently he had only one innings. It is clear that he considered this to be an achievement of the highest calibre. Now, the golden years of Beauclerk's career were those between 1797

and 1809. This is a space of thirteen seasons. But in one of them—1799—Beauclerk, for some reason, does not seem to have played any first-class cricket. To get the thirteen successive playing seasons taken by Beldham as a means of assessing a batsman's prowess the year 1796 has to be added, since in 1810 Beauclerk scored only 196 runs for an average of about 16. Between 1796 and 1809, then, Beauclerk scored 6358 runs in 131 games. This gives him an average of over 48 runs a match, a considerable improvement on Beldham's record.

But after all, what of that? There is no certainty to be obtained by calculations of this unimaginative sort. Cricket is not a branch of mathematics. It is not a demonstration of applied mechanics. It dwells with beauty, and beauty may be an effect of figure sometimes, but of figures very rarely. It is the great merit of Mitford that he never forgot this. To impressions of the æsthetic he readily responded. He was a scholar and proud of his scholarship. He saw the green sward of the cricket field and the sunlight of summer afternoons against a background of Greek temples and Roman palaces, and the struggle of rival teams echoed in his head to the noise of the clash of ancient armies and the intrigues of states and senates. The spirit of the great age of Parliamentary oratory had entered into his blood, so that he writes like a rhetorician. His rhetoric in itself is stirring, but it is overdrawn. He writes, for example, of Beldham, not as a man, but as a god. 'Never was such a player!' he exclaims, 'so safe, so brilliant, so quick, so circumspect; so able in counsel, so active in the field; in deliberation so judicious, in execution so tremendous. It mattered not to him who bowled, or how he bowled, fast or slow, high or low, straight or bias; away flew the ball from his bat like an eagle on the wing. It was a

study for Phidias to see Beldham rise to strike; the grandeur of the attitude, the settled composure of the look, the piercing lightning of the eye, the rapid glance of the bat, were electrical. Men's hearts throbbed within them, their cheeks turned pale and red. Michael Angelo should have painted him.' It is magnificent. But it is not human. It is not given to mortal beings to achieve such perfection. And if it were, we should find the perfection dull.

Beauclerk, like Irving, had a dragging foot, and sometimes, out of sheer perversity, he would emphasize this blemish by padding out his figure as though he were deformed. Such oddities of behaviour merely set off in a brighter light his customary grace at the wicket, which, as Mitford bears witness was modelled upon the stance of Beldham himself. In spite of them, master of every kind of bowling, he was the first to demonstrate the infinite possibilities of cricket. If Grace is the Shakespeare of the game, its Chaucer is Lord Frederick Beauclerk.

ALL MATCHES INCLUDED

		TIMES NOT OUT	HIGHEST SCORE	TOTAL	AVERAGE	GAME	
YEAR	INNINGS					MOM	LOST
1791	3	1	6 n.o.	6	3	I	4
1792	•		No match				
1793			No match				
1794			No match				
1795	10	1	31	111	12.3	5 8	2
1796	26	I	100	390	15.6	8	5
1797	31	3	104	750	26.7	12	4
1798	28	4	82 n.o.	510	21.2	12	3
1799		•	No match				
1800	17	I	72 n.o.	339	31.1	4	5
G	·		97				

		40000 4001 0	****			GAMES					
YEAR	INNINGS	NOT OUT	HIGHEST	TOTAL	AVERAGE	WON	LOST				
1801		0	34	168	18.6	2	2				
1802	9	0	5 4	240	21.8	5	1				
1803	14	4 .	112 n.o.	646	64.6		4				
1804	16	0	87	532	33.2	$\frac{3}{6}$	3				
1805	15	4	129 n.o.	688	62.5	6	5				
1806	22	ĭ	170	590	28.0	10	2				
1807	13	2	73	428	38.9	5	3				
1808	18	0	100	565	31.3	4	5				
1809	16	1	114	512	34.1	3	5				
1810	13	1	58	196	16.3	4	3				
1811			No match								
1812	2	0	86	87	43.5	Dra	wn				
1813	4	0	26	63	15.75	0	2				
1814	5 8	I	59 n.o.	102	25.5	3	0				
1815		.0	57	94	11.7	2	2				
1816	8	0	96	209	26.1	3	2				
1817	8	2	54 n.o. 82	149	24.8	3	I				
1818	6	0		155	25.8	0	3				
1819	7 6	0	20	95	13.5	4	1				
1820		1	95	194	38.8	2	0				
1821	9	2	43	230	32.8	4	1				
1822	12	2	95 n.o.	371	37.1	5	3				
1823	16	3	70	402	30.9	4	4				
	353	35	BEAUCLI	8822	27.7	YEAR) 120	72				
Matches for England											
1796	5	0	34	64	12.8	-2	1				
1797	2	I	53	54	54	1	0				
1798	5	1	29 n.o.	50	12.5	3	0				
1799			No match								
1800	11 .	0.	21	108	9.8	3	3				
1801	6	0	33	81	13.5	2	t				
1802	3	0	54	78	26	2	0				
1803	4	0	49	115	28.7	0	2				
1804	1	0	22	22	22	I	0				
1805	3 6	I	102 n.o.	151	75.5	1	I				
1806	6	0	47	101	16.8	2	I				
1807 1808	8	0	34	89	14.8	1	2				
1809	_	0	57	212	26.5	0	4				
1810	7	0	55	125 62	20.8	2	2				
1815	4	0	41 57	70	15·5 17·5	2	1 0				
1817	2	1	54 n.o.	69	69	1	0				
1819	2	Ó	20	3 6	18	2	0				
1820	2	o	1	1	.5	ī	0				
1823	1	0	70	70	70	o	I				
TOTAL	82	5	102 n.o.	1558	20.2	27	19				



HE STORY GOES that Thackeray, fixing up a lecture tour, had approached an Oxford Don with honeyed words and set the final seal on his self-recommendation by referring to his connection with *Punch*.

'Punch?' demanded that dim-eyed scholar. 'Punch?' Is that not a ribald publication?'

That was in 1857; and it may as well be stated that *Punch* was not in fact ribald, at that or any other time. ¹ All the same, this was not the first time that Thackeray had been snubbed on its account: George Borrow, for instance, had turned quite snappy when he tried to use it as a conversational gambit with that difficult man: 'It is a paper I never look at.' And ten years earlier we find Our Fat Contributor very apologetic about it himself, recording ruefully an overheard assurance that its writers were 'Chartists, Deists, Atheists, Anarchists, and Socialists, to a man.'

What is all this? Can this be our Mr. Punch, this area cat among the plump Victorian pigeons? Can

¹ Unless one credits the fantastic story that it once affixed to an obituary, recording the premature death of a Mr. Longbottom, the comment: ars longa vita brevis.

it be that this venerable old gentleman, on whose fiftieth birthday a solemn Te Deum was sung and who has just celebrated his hundredth in circumstances of the highest respectability, was once a dreadful child? Reader, it can. There was a time when you would have looked in vain for him at Windsor, when even Godless France excluded him; a time when libel actions were his daily bread and scurrilous sneers and subversive sentiments leaked from his low-bred lips.

We might take a look at the decade of his birth, that final decade of the industrial revolution which was so terribly known as the Hungry Forties. William the Fourth had followed his brother George to dusty death, Cumberland had been packed off to Hanover, Cambridge did little harm beyond consuming an inordinate number of public dinners; the old kings had been thankfully stowed away, and the new Queen was hissed at Ascot and wrote to her Uncle Leopold: 'The Whigs are the only safe and loyal people, and the Radicals will also rally round their Queen to protect her from the Tories.' Melbourne, last link with eighteenth-century politics, was finished. Whig and Tory were passing into Liberal and Conservative, and the bitter struggle between landlord and manufacturer was being fought out. Peel and Russell balanced the scales, with Mr. D'Israeli 'a nice young man for a small party.' In Ireland, stricken with famine and disease, Daniel O'Connell demanded repeal of the Union. Marx and Engels issued the first Communist manifesto. Led by O'Connor and O'Brien. the working classes, cheated of the suffrage by the 1832 Reform Act, clamoured for the six points of the People's Charter. The year 1848, which sent the flame of revolution licking round the thrones of Europe, saw their movement blow up and burst; and Louis Philippe. kicked off the throne of France, was sworn in as a special constable in London to assist at its defeat.

Steamships had begun to ply to America and India. In one week 357 railway projects were announced, with a total capital of £332,000,000. The first submarine cable was laid. Rowland Hill introduced his penny post. Various steam cars were tried out, one of which achieved the speed of twenty miles an hour. Professor Geolls, piloting Samuel Henson's steam-driven aeroplane, crashed from a height of 10,000 feet and lived to describe the experience.

Consols touched par for the first time for nearly a hundred years. The workhouses, those 'new Bastilles', were crammed to the doors, and another 1,200,000 paupers were in receipt of outdoor relief. The big industrial towns had trebled their population since the beginning of the century, with the help of half a million destitute Irish immigrants. The swinish multitude huddled in cellars or back-to-back hovels, and made a few pence by selling their excrement, which they hoarded until the muck-major came to cart it away to outlying farms.

Lady Flora Hastings, the symptoms of her enlarged liver arousing the suspicions of the Queen, was cut by the Court. The Atheneum quoted nothing from foreign literature which could not be read by a young lady. One read Harrison Ainsworth, Bulwer Lytton, D'Israeli the Younger, Charles Dickens, and Mr. Robert Montgomery's poems.

To the Press the edict had gone forth which every Fleet Street man knows to be more iron than the most iron censorship: 'This is a family journal.' 'We will laugh in the company of our wives and children,' wrote Thackeray; 'we will tolerate no indecorum; we like

that our matrons and girls should be pure.' The time had passed of the broadsheet and the scurrilous print, of artists like Rowlandson and Gillray. But the country did not know what it needed until the most English of its institutions was born in Paris, where Philipon, experimenting with lithography and gathering round him the best of French satirical artists, produced the first comic journal, *Charivari*.

Several imitations had made abortive appearances in London before a Northumbrian engraver, Ebenezer Landells, after peddling a similar scheme unsuccessfully to several publishers, took it to Henry Mayhew, reputed to be a man of ideas. Mayhew liked it, and set out on a round of the more Bohemian taverns to gather a team of collaborators. He first looked up his childhood friend, Gilbert Abbott à Beckett, with whom, as a schoolboy, he had started a satirical journal with a capital of £3 and 43 libels in its first number. Fortunately parental intervention had scotched the scheme, and the two thwarted editors had run away from home in protest. A Beckett found leisure from his activities at the Bar to edit in the course of his career some twenty journals and to write the leaders for the Illustrated London News. and, on one occasion, all three leaders for the Times. In Punch alone he left behind three thousand feet of writing, a column nearly as high as the Eiffel Tower. Mayhew also roped in Douglas Jerrold, player's son, ex-midshipman and printer's apprentice, the most successful dramatist of the day and a man who deserves to be remembered among early Victorian humorists for this, that his writings were said to contain not a single pun. As Editor of Lloyd's and of his own Weekly Newspaper, Jerrold became the greatest contemporary Radical journalist. He achieved the impossible combination of white-hot idealist and jovial boon-companion, with a caustic wit and a heart—as his unrealistic contemporaries were fond of observing—as tender as a woman's.

Mark Lemon, a tavern-keeper who dabbled in letters—indeed he dabbled so effectively that he left behind him some sixty plays—became first Editor of *Punch* at a salary of thirty shillings a week, which eventually rose to the unprecedented sum of £1,500 a year. Variously described as 'the kindest and most lovable elderly boy,' and 'a mealy-mouthed sycophant', Lemon guided the destinies of the paper for just on thirty years, and was content to be buried as 'Mark Lemon, Editor of *Punch*.'

One of several friends who preferred to assure themselves of the character of the new paper before associating themselves with it was the cautious Percival Leigh. The Professor, as he was always known, is the man responsible for the assumption that every reader of Punch is a scholar and a gentleman. His industriously academic humour continued to pour in years after he had become so feeble-minded that even Punch could not print him; the kindly Lemon had his copy set up, and proofs sent to him, but his work no longer found its way into the paper and the Professor never seemed to notice it. It was the Professor who introduced the rising young artist John Leech, who with Richard Doyle was to set his hallmark on Punch of the period: Leech, whose sympathies with the underdog quickened under Jerrold's influence, but whom Thackeray weaned to 'survey society from the gentleman's point of view'; poor Leech, who bore a striking resemblance to the melancholy Stan Laurel, and was killed by Italian organgrinders.

Landells provided £25 capital. A printer was found.

A prospectus was produced, headed by portraits of Melbourne and his Ministers, popularly and correctly believed to be on the verge of falling, and the announcement: Will Be Out Shortly. And on July 17, 1841, the first number of *Punch* was issued 'at the irresistibly comic charge of threepence' and with a strong leader advocating the abolition of capital punishment.

'One of these ephemeral things they bring out,' a testy old gentleman commented in G. F. Watts's hearing. 'Won't last a fortnight.'

MAYHEW HAD made over the original *Charivari* more to the English taste: where the French sheet was satirical the English journal was more nearly comic. But in those early years Jerrold set the political tone, and set it unambiguously. Week by week *Punch* gave its readers strong stuff like the following, from Jerrold's famous 'Q Papers':

Now, however, there are no Tories. Oh, no! Sir Robert Peel is a Conservative—Lyndhurst is a Conservative—all are Conservative. Toryism has sloughed its old skin, and rejoices in a new coat of many colours; but the sting remains—the venom is the same; the reptile that would have struck to the heart the freedom of Europe elaborates the self-same poison, is endowed with the same subtilty, the same grovelling, tortuous action. It still creeps upon its belly, and wriggles to its purpose. When adders shall become eels, then will we believe that Conservatives cannot be Tories.

When folks change their names—unless by the gracious permission of the *Gazette*—they rarely do so to avoid the fame of brilliant deeds. It is not the act of an over-sensi-

tive modesty that induces Peter Wiggins to dub himself John Smith . . . Depend upon it, Peter has been signalised in the Hue and Cry as one endowed with a love for the silver spoons of other men-as an individual who, abusing the hospitality of his lodgings, has conveyed away and sold the best goose feathers of his landlady. What then, with his name ripe enough to drop from the tree of life, remains to Wiggins, but to subside into Smith? What hope was there for the well-known swindler, the posted pickpocket, the callous-hearted, slug-brained Tory? None: he was hooted. pelted at; all men stopped the nose at his approach. He was voted a nuisance, and turned forth into the world, with all his vices, like ulcers, upon him. Well, Tory adopts the inevitable policy of Wiggins; he changes his name! He comes forth, curled and sweetened, and with a smile upon his mealy face, and placing his felon hand above the vacuum on the left side of his bosom—declares, whilst the tears he weeps would make a crocodile blush-that he is by no means the Tory his wicked, heartless enemies, would call him. Certainly not. His name is—Conservative!

At this time the poverty and unemployment throughout the country, and especially in the industrial north, reached such proportions that a demand was made in Parliament for an inquiry into its causes and remedies. The motion was defeated, and a Tory paper reported that in consequence 'there has for the last few days been a smile on the face of every well-dressed gentleman, and of every well-to-do artisan, who wend their way along the streets of this vast metropolis.' Punch, however, conducted his own inquiry, and reported to the Home Office on a typical family:

The family consisted of a husband and wife, four girls, eight boys, and an infant of three weeks old, making in all fifteen individuals. They told me they were literally dying of hunger, and that they had applied to the vestry, who had referred them to the guardians, who had referred them

to the overseer, who had referred them to the relieving officer, who had gone out of town, and would be back in a week or two. Now even supposing there were a brief delay in attending to their case, at least by the proper authorities, you will perceive that I have already alluded to a baker's and a butcher's, both (it will scarcely be believed at the Home-office) in the very street the family were residing in. Being determined to judge for myself, I counted personally the number of four-pound loaves in the baker's window, which . . . would give 12 pounds and 14 fractions of a pound to each individual. Knocking off the baby for the sake of uniformity, and striking out the mother, both of whom might be supposed to take the fancy-bread and the flour . . . we should get the enormous quantity of fifteen full pounds weight of bread, or a stone and one-fourteenth (more, positively, than anybody ought to eat), for the husband and each of the children (except the baby, who gets a moiety of the rolls) belonging to this starving family!!! You will see, Sir, how shamefully matters have been misrepresented by the Anti-Corn-Law demagogues.

Punch also gave landowners suggestions on preserving peasants, exposed workhouse conditions and re-published advertisements for £10-a-year governesses under the title, State of the Slave Market. And it was Punch which published, in its Christmas number and within a comic border, Tom Hood's 'Song of the Shirt.'

Such solid fare was liberally sprinkled with the sugar of innumerable facetiæ: Jonathanisms ('There is a man who has lived so long in the State of O-hi-o, that he can't pay anybody'), puns ('Pit's full,' as the Earl of Chatham said after dinner'), conundrums ('When does a man have a vegetable time-piece?—When he gets a potato clock (gets up-at-eight-o'clock)'), the most atrocious of them usually fathered unscrupulously on the wildly solemn Colonel Sibthorp, the Colonel Blimp of the day.

Even the illustrations were mostly pictorial puns, except for the political 'big cut,' which dates with few gaps from the very first number, and, by the way, introduced the word cartoon, in its modern application, into the language. The occasion was the Westminster exhibition of cartoons, gigantic designs for frescoes to ornament the walls of the new Houses of Parliament. Punch provided a rival exhibition in a series of six 'cartoons' directed against current social abuses. The first, 'Substance and Shadow', depicted a ragged and starving audience at a suggested free day, and bore the legend, 'The Poor ask for Bread, and the philanthropy of the State accords—an Exhibition.' It was from the hand of Leech, and might be compared with a present-day Daily Worker satire. This was before Leech made the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic grade with his hunting sketches. The social implication is obvious. 'Leech's love of horses,' wrote M. H. Spielmann in his History of 'Punch', 'was natural to the man, and had no little influence in toning down those rampant ideas of Democracy and Socialism to which Thackeray referred. In the opinion of many, not all the Conservative party, landlords and House of Peers together, will, in the great coming struggle with "King Demos," exert against him and his Socialism a fraction of the power of resistance that will ultimately be found in the national love of horses and of sport.'

EACH ISSUE was worked out collectively at meetings which foreshadowed the famous *Punch* dinner round the 'mahogany tree.' In those humbler days, however, the

conferences took place in taverns: La Belle Sauvage, at Ludgate Circus, or the Crown in Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane, later to be the headquarters of the Savage Club. The livelier members also met socially next door at the Whistling Oyster, an oyster-bar with a literary clientèle, which made the headlines when one of its stock unaccountably but unmistakably began to emit a shrill and continuous whistle. The establishment for a time drew crowds as large as Drury Lane theatre opposite, and the Punch staff did their share in publicising this remarkable mollusc. Jerrold declared it had been crossed in love and whistled to show it didn't care; Thackeray produced an American who had remarked disparagingly that an oyster in Massachusetts not only whistled 'Yankee Doodle' but followed its master about like a dog; and a report began to circulate that this oyster could whistle 'God Save the Queen,' and had been summoned to a command performance at Windsor Castle: a summons hastily cancelled when it was learnt that the musician was a native.

They were convivial affairs, these meetings, from which the jovial Kenny Meadows, who was over fifty and should have known better, used to lead bands of merry literary gents through the Victorian streets to serenade more sober-minded colleagues in their beds, and from which even Jerrold, who declared the bottle the devil's crucible, would set off home with a label tied round his neck for safety's sake; though when a party of drunken young sparks reeled up to him to ask the way to the Judge and Jury he could summon up the austerity to rebuke them: 'Straight on as you are going, young gentlemen; you can't miss them.'

What things have we seen done at the 'Mermaid'! Once the merry dogs stole Albert Smith's hat and

umbrella from the cloakroom and pawned them; but the unsporting fellow took it in very bad part and fetched a policeman. Smith was not popular, for when it came to standing his round 'compared with him, the eel was an adhesive animal.' Jerrold disliked him; he declared that his initials were only two-thirds of the truth, and retorted, when Smith reminded him that they both rowed in the same boat, 'True, but not with the same skulls.' Leech disliked him, and when he caught a street-urchin jeering at him gave the lad a penny with an approving, 'Good boy! Now go and insult someone else.' So Smith went off to climb Mont Blanc and become a travelogue commentator.

IN SUCH an atmosphere were devised such regrettable lapses from good taste as the following piece of Court Intelligence ('By the Correspondent of the Observer'):

The interesting condition of Her Majesty is a source of the most agonising suspense to the Lord Mayors of London and Dublin, who, if a Prince of Wales is not born before their period of office expires, will lose the chance of being created baronets.

According to rumour, the baby—we beg pardon, the scion of the house of Brunswick—was to have been born—we must apologise again; we should say was to have been added to the illustrious stock of the reigning family of Great Britain—some day last month, and of course the present Lord Mayors had comfortably made up their minds that they should be entitled to the dignity it is customary to confer on such occasions as that which the nation now ardently anticipates. But here we are at the beginning of

November, and no Prince of Wales. We have reason to know that the Lord Mayor of London has not slept a wink since Saturday, and his lady has not smiled, according to an authority on which we are accustomed to rely, since Thursday fortnight. Some say it is done on purpose, because the present official is a Tory; and others insinuate that the Prince of Wales is postponed in order that there may be an opportunity of making Daniel O'Connell a baronet! Others suggest that there will be twins presented to the nation! one on the night of the 8th of November, the other on the morning of the 9th, so as to conciliate both parties; but we are not disposed at present to pronounce a decided opinion on this part of the question.

For years *Punch* delighted in such squibs as bogus Court Circulars, contributed as often as not by the Boy Jones, that young sweep who on half a dozen occasions penetrated the defences of Buckingham Palace and secreted himself in the Royal apartments for days at a time, going to prison for his pains but emerging undeterred. There was a whole series at a time when *Punch*—particularly Jerrold, the playwright—was more than usually exasperated by the Queen's patronage of the Italian opera at the expense of the English drama:

On Wednesday night, her Majesty the Queen and his Royal Highness Prince Albert, with a numerous suite, honoured Drury Lane Theatre with a state visit. The pieces played were a new comedy, called Better Late than Never, The Illustrious Stranger, and the pantomime. Her Majesty appeared to be highly delighted with the entertainments.

Next week the Queen was at a command performance, at Covent Garden, of She's Come at Last and The Agreeable Surprize. A few days later Drury Lane again entertained her with the comedy (never before acted), Wonders

Will Never Cease, and shortly afterwards, dressed in white satin trimmed with lace (all of British manufacture), and accompanied by Prince Albert, as usual in Field-Marshal's uniform, she was once more at Covent Garden to witness Are you sure 'tis She? followed by the old farce, My Spouse and I. Sometimes the Court Circular was printed, for greater convenience, in French and Italian. Similarly, on the birth of a new princess, Punch's own reporter revealed that Donizetti had been commissioned to provide a series of concertos for the penny trumpet, and had already delivered a setting of 'This Little Pig Went to Market,' of which the words were as follows '

Questo piccolo porco
E andato al mercato.

Questo piccolo porco
E a casa restato.

Questo piccolo porco
Ha avuto del rosbief per pranza.

Questo piccolo porco,
Niente ebbe nel sua stanza.

But the tone adopted towards the Queen and her children was servile compared with *Punch's* handling of Prince Albert. Let the wretched Consort attend the prorogation of Parliament and this was the comment:

It will be seen that Prince Albert, who formerly upon state occasions sat on a little chair, has had a large one made for him. At the last prorogation, he was allowed a very moderate-sized seat; but now he is favoured with one in every respect the same as that prepared for Her Majesty. What has Prince Albert lately done to entitle him to a larger share of elbow-room than was formerly allowed him? The Prince has evidently been 'looking up' ever since his marriage. On his first taking part in state ceremonies, he used to sit upon footstools, hassocks, or anything he could get.

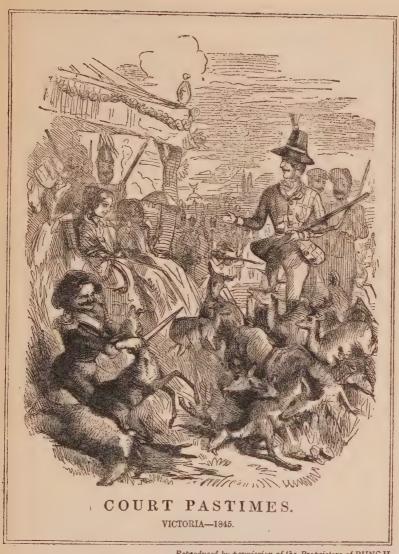
Let him design a shako for his regiment, and *Punch* kicked it merrily through a hundred issues. Let him sit for one more portrait in Field-Marshal's uniform and *Punch* published the following completely bogus account of the Waterloo Banquet:

The dinner over, HER MAJESTY'S health was drunk with acclamations. After which the Duke of Wellington rose to give the health of PRINCE ALBERT. His Royal Highness (said His Grace) was, indeed, a very young soldier; but his military ardour was most pleasingly conspicuous. (Cheers.) It was delightful to see him in the van of all the picture shops. His Royal Highness had been painted in, it was impossible to say how many uniforms: and if he, the Duke, knew anything of what made a soldier, he would argue from the bold and determined way in which, in his picture, his Royal Highness held his hussar-cap—he would (said the Duke) prophesy for the Prince, in the event of a war, a grove of never-fading laurel. (Cheers.) He could not sit down without also alluding to the graceful, yet sagacious way, in which his Royal Highness, in another picture, held his bâton de maréchal. It was very pretty-more than pretty; it was great. He would confidently refer the company to the window of Mr. Colnaghi to bear him out. His Grace concluded by proposing—'Health to the soldier, PRINCE ALBERT!'

Band,—' How happy the soldier who lives on his pay.'

Let Cambridge make Albert a Doctor of Civil Law, and *Punch* offered him the Chair of Hebrew at the University of Houndsditch. Soon it was tipping him for Lord Mayor. When the post of keeper of Golden Square fell vacant, and a candidate with three children was selected, Albert weighed in (according to *Punch*) with 'Vote for Albert and five children.' Soon *Punch* was able to announce a royal At Home, at which the Prince would give

a series of sketches from the répertoire of his favourite impersonations. It is expected that his new addition to his



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old stock of parts—namely, that of Chancellor of the University of Cambridge—will afford the most ample food for merriment. His well-known sketch of a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn is a very delicious piece of acting, and his Field Marshal, though bordering on caricature, is a rich piece of extravagance. The perfect manner in which he 'makes up' for all the different parts, however opposite they may be, is truly astonishing.

When Albert assumed the new office of Butcher to the Queen, in consequence of his stag and otter-hunting exploits at Blair Atholl, *Punch's* language waxed proportionately stronger. It had some nasty things to say about the royal hunting party at the court of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, where forty head of deer were driven into a confined space and picked off at leisure by the royal gentlemen, while the ladies watched from easy chairs and the band played polkas:

SING a song of Gotha—a pocket-full of rye, Eight-and-forty timid deer driven in to die; When the sport was open'd, all bleeding they were seen— Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a Queen?

Punch arranged for the ceremonial presentation to Prince Albert of a butcher's apron and steel, to be preserved as part of the royal regalia, and on the close of the hunting season offered him a formal address of condolence.

THE TONE of the Press was well in the Eatanswill tradition at that time, and it is only natural that *Punch* was soon in conflict with those Tory twins, the *Morning Herald* and the *Standard*. The immediate occasion was a drawing by Leech of a proud mother, bearing a prophetic

but entirely accidental resemblance to the old Queen Victoria. She is fondling two children, who today would unquestionably be named Marina and Winston Spencer, and assuring a visitor that 'Alexandrina Victoria is a good deal better; but dear little Albert here is still very delicate.' The Standard, attacking through Punch the Times, from whose politics of Manchester liberalism Punch was inclined to take his cue, denounced what it chose to consider a piece of lèse-majesté in more than usually hysterical terms. Punch had an answer ready. Martin Chuzzlewit was the current best-seller and all London was chuckling at Mrs. Gamp and her fictitious Mrs. Harris. Punch solved the literary mystery: Mrs. Harris was none other than the Editress of the Standard. He particularised further:

MRS. HARRIS is an aged female, and is the mistress of a concern called the *Standard*. Her habiliments, by no means either of the newest or the cleanest, are chiefly remarkable for their latitude; in which respect they are similar to her tongue. Like her friend, MRS. GAMP, the subject of our memoir always carries about with her an umbrella, and is constantly poking it in somebody's face. She wears pattens; a precaution which the nature of her walks renders very necessary; but which are constantly tripping her up: when she is apt to pull them off and fling them at the head of anybody who laughs at her, invariably, however, missing her aim. Hence it will be surmised, with truth, that the temper of MRS. HARRIS is hasty; indeed, but for the respect due to age, we should be justified in designating her a beldam.

Mrs. Harris, when irritated, is by no means choice in her language; using, in fact, the simple Saxon of Billingsgate.—Otherwise addicted to circumlocution, Mrs. Harris is concise in abuse.—The perceptions of Mrs. Harris are limited. Hence she is very apt to make ludicrous blunders. Her pertinacity is intense; wherefore, when she finds

herself in the wrong she persists in it, telling nobody to talk to her, for she knows better, and won't hear a word. The old lady is very bigoted and intolerant, and eaten up with a fanaticism, which she mistakes for piety. The loyalty of this 'blessed woman' is of a piece with her devotion; apparently a kind of tipsy sentiment. In its paroxysms she becomes incoherent, and raves of nailing her flag to a mast, but has never been known to do more than tie her pocket-handkerchief to her umbrella.

By implication, of course, Mrs. Harris was no more than a figment of the besotted imagination of Mrs. Gamp, Editress of the Morning Herald, whose views, in fact, she dutifully echoed. The two editresses, created by Leech's pencil as a couple of bunchy females, armed with large umbrellas and with their faces completely obscured by monstrous mob-caps, figured regularly in Punch's pages. They had nice cosy chats over a drop of 'something comfortable.' 'I tell you what it is, Mrs. Arris,' observes Mrs. Gamp. 'The Times is a hinfamous fabricator.' 'So it is, my dear,' Mrs. Harris concurs; 'and as for that nasty, hojus Punch, I'm dispoged to scratch is hi's out a'most. What I ses, I ses; and what I ses, I sticks to.' The Standard comes out strong in favour of that 'stable'-minded Tory, Lord George Bentinck, and Punch announces: 'Mrs. Harris in Love.' The Herald laments the frivolousness of its contemporaries, and Punch reports: 'Mrs. GAMP IN THE DISMALS.' The Standard affirms gloomily that her worst predictions are always verified, and Punch provides the intelligence that the old lady is setting up in business as a professional fortune-teller:

Political predictions may be had at a reduced rate, in consequence of the great accumulation now on hand, including the celebrated prophecy that Sir R. Peel would not propose a repeal of the Corn Laws, and that LORD

GEORGE BENTINCK would be Prime Minister within the next twelve months. Protectionist orators can be supplied with forebodings of the ruin of the country within any period, from six weeks to six years, according to the price agreed upon . . . N.B. Please to ring the top bell, and ask for Mrs. Harris.

It was a lively campaign, which Gilbert à Beckett and Percival Leigh, assisted by Henry Mayhew's brother Horace, sustained with unflagging gusto.

Equally spirited was the campaign against the Morning Post, a journal which 'in those days'—again quoting the invaluable Mr. Spielmann—'adopted a tone towards Court and Society hardly in keeping with modern ideas of manly independence.' The Post society reporter, in fact, adopted a jargon which combined the adulations of a present-day gossip-writer with the ecstasies of one of our swooning balletomanes. Let us accompany him to the Opera:

Ever since the Italian lyrical drama crossed the Alps in the suite of the tasteful Medicis, its vogue has daily increased, it has become a ruling passion—it is the quintessence of all civilised pleasures, and wherever its principal virtuosi hoist their standard, there for the time is the capital of Europe, where the most illustrious, noble, elegant, and tasteful members of society assemble. These ornaments of society are in general absent at the too early opening of her Majesty's Theatre-but on Saturday, as we surveyed the house, previous to the overture, most of those who constitute society in England—those whom we respect, esteem, or love, rapidly filled the house. Every seat in every part of it was occupied, and if those objectionable spectators were there—those gentlemen of ambiguous gentility, the fashionable couriers, valets, tailors, and shoemakers, who obtain admission to the pit on the strength of knowing the measure of some actor or actress's foot—they, and their frowsy dames, were so nailed to their benches as not to offend the eye.

This creature was promptly personified as Jenkins, flunkey of flunkeys, who lived on herrings in a ricketty three-pair back and there gave himself up to ecstatic daydreams of high society. Occasionally he would iron his solitary shirt-front and issue forth to collect a few back-stairs crumbs—the Post reporter did, in fact, get into Apsley House in the livery of a footman-but usually he relied entirely on his flunkey imagination. Jenkins, and Lickspittleoff, his Russian Editor, became a staple feature of Punch. Let the Post draw attention to the blood-purifying properties of nettle-tops, and Punch was ready with testimonials from Whitechapel and Shoreditch tradesmen who, having followed Jenkins' advice and lived for a week on nettles, had purified their blood so effectively that they were now indistinguishable from Earls and Marquesses. Let Jenkins observe at Princess Augusta's wedding 'the Queen Adelaide, living model of every Virtue which can adorn a Woman,' and Punch is at his heels to point out, with a 'Ha, Jenkins! That comes of writing copy before the event, that the Queen Dowager, owing to indisposition, had not in fact attended the wedding at all. Let Jenkins permit his fancy to rove over the dresses of débutantes at the royal ball, and Punch, with Burns, is demanding of this flea in a lady's bonnet:

HA! Whare you gaun, ye crowlin ferlie! Your impudence protects you sairly, I canna say but ye strunt rarely Owre gauze and lace; Tho' faith, I fear ye dine but sparely On sic a place.

Soon Punch was publishing a letter from Nathaniel Jenkins, a footman, who wished it to be known that he had no connection with his namesake of the

Morning Post. Punch gave his protest a sympathetic hearing:

NATHANIEL JENKINS is a very decent sensible fellow, and had his unfortunate namesake written as good English as our correspondent, why, the critic Jenkins-poor cockchafer !--would never have been impaled upon the iron pen of Punch. But Nathaniel must not misunderstand us. We do not sneer at the livery that encases the corporal part of JENKINS. Not that his body but that his soul is in livery, are we compelled to flog him with nettle-tops. Yes: his soul! Look, reader: peep in at the brain of JENKINS (you must use a glass, by the way, of great magnifying power). There, perched on pia mater, is what certain anatomists call the soul. With different men it takes different shapes. In the brain of JENKINS it is shaped like a Lilliput monkey, and there it sits, like the larger monkeys on the barrel-organs of those pedestrian virtuosi (as Jenkins himself would say) who grind you off ha'porths of Mozart or Donizetti. There is the monkey-soul of Jenkins! And see you not his nether monkey, glowing in red plush? That is JENKINS' soul in full livery; and for that soul, so habited, we must (it is a public duty) continue to flog Jenkins.

And continue they did. 'Punch will never leave you,' they told him. 'He has fixed you upon his wheel; and, though Mr. Pope tells us we ought not to rack flies or grubs upon so tremendous a machine, Punch will nevertheless crack every bone in your sycophantic anatomy. 'Punch will nail you like a dead weazel on the barn door of the Press; or, mercifully preserving you alive, he will send you to the showman in Holborn, to be exhibited with the new Spotted Boy, with this announcement to the world:

HERE YOU MAY SEE JENKINS, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE!

Jerrold, the initiator of the Jenkins-hunt, was soon joined by A Beckett and Thackeray. It must have

been an uneasy combination. Jerrold's sentiments were unambiguous: flunkeyism was fire to his gunpowder. One still quotes his rebuke to the young snob, arrivé now and anxious to disown his humble origins, who rode up to him one day in the street with a 'Well, you see I'm all right at last!' 'Yes, I see you now ride upon your cat's meat.' In Jerrold's eyes, however, Thackeray was always a little suspect. Indeed the day came when Thackeray had cause to regret his early misjudgment, for when the author of 'The Snobs of England' himself began to go out into society the original Jenkins, Rumsey Forster, was still at his little table outside the drawingrooms of the great houses, ready to take down the names of guests as they were announced: and Thackeray's name was always studiously ignored. At last he could bear it no longer and one night at Lansdowne House approached the table, cleared his throat and announced pointedly: 'I am Mr. Thackeray.' 'Yes, sir, I am quite aware,' replied Forster. 'And I, sir,' he is reported to have added, 'am Mr. Jenkins.'

Sometimes Punch even went beyond his function, as in the famous Graham scandal. Sir James Graham, that highly unpopular Home Secretary, had been caught violating, at the request of the Government of Naples, the correspondence of Mazzini, then a refugee in London. Several British Chartists, among them the artist Linton, complained that their letters were being similarly opened. A year or two previously, to commemorate the introduction of the penny post, the authorities had produced the ill-starred Mulready

envelope, with its allegorical device of Britannia dispatching winged messengers to the subjects of her farflung empire. Such a storm of ridicule had been poured upon it that a special destructor had to be built to burn up the whole issue. Punch now produced a Graham envelope, drawn by Leech and engraved by Linton himself, in which Graham as Britannia dispatched a multitude of Paul Prys to peep through keyholes and peer over the shoulders of letter-writers. This was quickly followed by the Anti-Graham wafers, a sheet of seals - 'extra-strongly gummed'-bearing such devices as a lobster ('Not to be red without getting into hot water'), a bee ('Touch my wax and you'll feel my sting') and Graham's head ('Nothing particular inside'). Both envelope and seals found a ready sale, and were sent through the post in large numbers. Furthermore, 'Mr. Punch's Complete Letter-Writer', the first instalment of which appeared at this moment, was neatly dedicated to Sir James Graham; and a notice from St. Martin's-le-Grand informed foreign rulers of the following alterations in the post office timetable:

Letters posted at	Opened at
9 a.m.	10 a.m.
10 a.m.	II a.m.
12	2 p.m.
2 p.m.	4 p.m. 6 p.m.
4 p.m.	6 p.m.

At this time Mr. Punch had a number of personal butts who provided him and his readers with a good deal of amusement. There was that pocket-dictator, the Alderman Sir Peter Laurie, who proposed to 'put down' suicide among 'starving villains who fly in the face of

their Maker', and condemned a penniless wretch to the treadmill for attempting to cut his own throat. (On the other hand, declaring that 'a man with such hair would do anything,' he let another prisoner off his fine on condition that he had his hair cut in the presence of the Bench, paying the barber out of his own pocket). A saddler by trade, Sir Peter long figured in Punch's pages as 'the pigskin Solomon'. Then there was Mons. Jullien, chef d'orchestre of the Promenade Concerts, the comic musician par excellence, with his mop of long hair, his black moustache, his elaborate gestures and extravagant displays of temperament, his frenzied quadrilles 'accentutuated by a salvo of artillery' and his conceit of conducting any piece of Beethoven's with a jewelled baton and a pair of clean kid gloves handed to him on a silver salver. Jullien, as part of his scheme for civilising the world by music, proposed a musical setting of the Lord's Prayer, a work which could not fail to succeed 'with two of the greatest names in history on the title page'. In Punch's landscape he was a prominent geographical feature, referred to invariably as the Mons Jullien.

The Pecksniffery, or Art Union, campaign, conducted by Jerrold, embalms the memory of Samuel Carter Hall, traditionally held to be the original Pecksniff. The Art Union, a pseudo-cultural institution which pushed industrial art products in consideration of subsidies from their manufacturers, was conducted by Mr. Hall on a high emotional level; his cultural travail left him exhausted, he confessed, 'hand, head, and heart.' Punch echoed his sentiments: 'gloves, hat, and waist-

A new-fangled affair in those days. Moustaches were the prerogative of cavalry officers, and a railway carpenter who had the temerity to grow one, and who was rightly assaulted by his friends in consequence, was refused a writ against them with some asperity by a Piccadilly magistrate, who told him he had got no more than he deserved: 'Why need an Englishman make a Jew of himself?'

coat.' In imitation of the 'magnificent art plates' issued to Art Union subscribers, *Punch* produced his own plate, one of the humble domestic variety, somewhat chipped, 'from the original in the artist's collection.' The campaign nearly involved *Punch* in its first libel action; but in the end Hall lacked the courage to bring it.

On one occasion the Pecksniffian label was applied elsewhere:

We have heard (wrote Jerrold) that Mr. Charles Dickens is about to apply to the Court of Chancery for an injunction to prevent Sir Robert Peel continuing any longer to personate, in his capacity of Premier, the character of Mr. Pecksniff, as delineated in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, that character being copyright. We hope this rumour is unfounded, as the injunction would certainly be refused. Sir Robert Peel is in a condition to prove that the part in question has been enacted by him for a long series of years, and was so, long before any of Mr. Dickens's works appeared; in short, that he, Sir Robert Peel, is now the original Pecksniff.

Punch very nearly came to grief in the course of its campaign against the British and Foreign Institute, an adumbration of the British Council which was founded in 1843 by James Silk Buckingham, the traveller and author, who had done much to expose maladministration in India and was at the head of various reform and temperance movements. Punch, remembering that Buckingham had raised subscriptions to finance a voyage of cultural discovery, a scheme which had not materialised, labelled his organisation the British and foreign Destitute and invariably assumed that Buckingham lived by misappropriating the subscriptions of its members. It was not Buckingham who protested, however, but one of his lecturers, George Jones, an American of

literary pretensions whom the unprincipled Punch had declared to be the uncle of the Boy Jones. His letter of denial-'The gratifying manner in which I have been honoured by their Majesties the Kings of the French and of Prussia (to the latter of whom my work on Ancient America is dedicated) and by many distinguished personages both in Great Britain and on the Continent, is no doubt calculated to excite the envy and malevolence of little minds'—was published by Punch over a facsimile of the author's signature. Jones, realising what a fool he had made of himself, denounced the letter as a forgery, and began a libel action, from which he subsequently retreated, paying all the costs. Thereupon Buckingham issued a pamphlet, couched in somewhat Biblical language, appealing against his persecution by Punch. Jerrold failed to demolish it altogether, and the subtler Thackeray, in an article infuriatingly indulgent in tone, paved the way to a graceful retreat by all parties.

More effective was the retaliation of Alfred Bunn, Manager of Drury Lane and author of a quantity of incredibly bad verse as well as of 'Tancred: a Tale, by the author of Conrad: a Tragedy.' As the 'poet Bunn', or, in his more testy moments, 'the hot cross Bunn', he smarted under Punch's attacks for six years. Then, with the help of George Augustus Sala, whose contributions Punch had 'unctuously declined', and of the renegade Albert Smith, he produced 'A Word With Punch', a slashing attack on 'Mr. Wronghead' (Jerrold), 'Mr. Sleekhead' (A Beckett) and 'Mr. Thickhead' (Lemon). The Punch staff bought it up as far as possible, and never

devised any effective reply.

THE TRANSITION of Punch's political satire from the venomous to the genial is most marked in the handling of Lord Brougham, who provides more genuine fun than Peel, Disraeli, Russell, Louis Philippe, O'Connell and the other political figures of the decade together. This extraordinary man, to whom we owe such diverse benefits as the carriage and the University of London. Cannes, and the Central Criminal Court, had passed the flush of his popularity. The world, while remembering his ambiguous conduct as Queen Caroline's attorney, passed over his many reforms and noted instead his political instability, his cantankerousness, his eccentric oratory and his incredible vanity. Brougham, indeed, is credited with having spread the report of his own death to see what the obituaries would have to say of him: and the calculated drama of one of his perorations, at the conclusion of which he fell on his knees and remained apparently in prayer, had been sadly deflated by solicitous friends, who, mindful of the draughts of mulled port with which he had kept himself going throughout his speech, tactfully gathered him up and placed him on the Woolsack to recover. That Woolsack was now a nostalgic memory, and Brougham sat on the opposition benches; but his eyes turned longingly towards Tory office, and the Duke of Wellington was popularly supposed to have him in his pocket.

Punch's early attacks were virulent. They exploited to the full the possibilities of advertising hack broughams for sale or hire, and rejoiced in announcements like

the following:

His Grace the Duke of Wellington this day forwarded (per Parcels-Delivery Company) a very beautiful spaniel, as a present to Lord Brougham. It is a most affectionate and delightfully fawning little creature; though it has,

to be sure, once or twice laboured under the slander of hydrophobia, snapping and snarling at everybody. To the Duke, however, it has of late shown the greatest affection—licking his hands, his feet, and swallowing every morsel that may have fallen from his lips, with a great wagging of the tail, and other indications of extreme delight. It has, however, been a matter of regret that the dog, in its puppyhood, was never wormed. The spaniel's name is VAUX.

Brougham's remarkable nose and equally remarkable plaid trousers were a godsend to the caricaturist; indeed it was alleged that Punch would be compelled to widen his columns 'to show, as far as space will permit, to what lengths a nose may go in the hands of an unprincipled illustrator.' He appeared pictorially as a clown at the Westminster Circus, inquiring of the ringmaster (the ringmaster at Astley's was the immortal Mr. Widdicomb): 'Now, MR. Wellington, is there anything I can run for to fetch-for to come-for to go-for to carryfor to bring-for to take?'; as Bottom, rehearsing the new Westminster play: 'Let me play the lion: I will roar that I will do any man's heart good to hear me: I will roar, that I will make the Duke say, Let him roar again: Let him roar again'; as Mrs. Caudle, nagging her spouse the Lord Chancellor (his head pillowed on the invidious Woolsack): 'What do you say? Thank heaven! You're going to enjoy the recess—and you'll be rid of me for some months? Never mind. Depend upon it, when you come back, you shall have it again. No: I don't raise the House, and set everybody in it by the ears; but I'm not going to give up every little privilege; though it's seldom I open my lips, goodness knows!'; and in a political version of the Judgment of Paris, in which Peel, Bentinck and Russell are seen stripped to their small-clothes for



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BROUGHAM

the verdict of John Bull, Brougham clings to Peel's shirt-tails, a Cupid in plaid trousers.

Quotation cannot hope to evoke the cumulative fun of the chase, but the following should be preserved:

Our friend Lord Brougham is reported, by a morning contemporary, to have favoured the Peers, in Parliament assembled, with the following important piece of information:

'LORD BROUGHAM said, that, at present, as their Lordships were aware, letters to this country, from France, Holland and Belgium, and vice versa, were prepaid or not, at the option of the sender. Since this arrangement took effect he received every morning large packets of letters, of which he had to pay the postage (a laugh), and which he felt to be a very great hardship, for he could not tell what they contained until he opened them. Four or five of the packets he had thus received were directed most perfidiously in the handwriting of a lady or gentleman, as the case might be, of his acquaintance, as he thought, and, on opening them, he found them to be quack circulars. (A laugh.) Of course, he could do nothing but send these communications back under cover, and the parties would take them in or not, as they chose.'

How defective are the parliamentary reports of the newspapers! Our contemporary omits to mention that his Lordship proceeded to complain that—

He (LORD BROUGHAM) had a smoky chimney which, notwithstanding he had had recourse to the best advice, he had not yet been able to get cured. . . . His butcher, he was sorry to say, had lately supplied him with very bad meat; and, to make matters worse, the last joint was underdone, which was peculiarly annoying, as it happened to be a hand of pork. Nor was the peas-pudding that accompanied it at all to his satisfaction, and he gave their Lordships notice that he should discharge his cook. Some-

body, he did not know who it was, or he would have brought the guilty person before the House, had broken his area bellwire, and had likewise evidently attempted to pull off his knocker; and the pot-boys did sums in arithmetic on his doorposts, or even defaced them with caricatures, which he had reason to believe were intended for himself. He would ask their Lordships, did any of them keep cats? (Several noble Lords answered in the affirmative.) Well, then, he would inquire whether the cats of the noble Lords were in the habit of running away with mincepies? His own cat was; nay, even with rounds of beef and shoulders of mutton. There were draughts in nearly all his rooms; his house was infested with black beetles; his boots pinched him; and the last pair of trowsers he had had made, didn't fit.

In the end, however, *Punch* grew really affectionate towards his old friend and the two were inseparable companions. Indeed to this day you can see Brougham's mask, trailed along by one of the fauns on Richard Doyle's cover.

But Mr. Punch, like a number of other people at that time, was going up in the world. His attacks on Prince Albert continued, certainly; Thackeray was to leave him for his vulgar abuse of Louis Napoleon, and the Catholic Richard Doyle for his campaign against 'Papal Aggression'. But respectability had set in. The Jerrold of the 'Q Papers' had given place (much to his own disgust) to the Jerrold of 'Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures'. Leech, who had once celebrated the British poor, had now found a more genial subject in the British householder. Mr. Punch, who a few years previously had pointed out the justice of much of the Chartist programme—incidentally his name was found affixed to the Chartist petition, along with other bogus signatures such as those of Queen Victoria and the Duke of Welling-

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ton—rejoiced in the collapse of the movement; he, who had welcomed the income tax as an equitable measure, now voiced the woes of the poor taxpayer. The 'social' joke began to supplant the political satire and in fact Thackeray established a weighty precedent by publishing a joke of which nobody has ever been able to see the point: though a rival paper offered a reward of £500



HORRID TRACEDY IN PRIVATE LIFE!

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THACKERAY'S JOKE WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN DETECTED.

and a free pardon to anyone who could do so.

Mr. Punch was still quite pleased to see the mighty brought low, as long as they were foreigners: but at the end of 1848 his very self-satisfied John Bull, with his fat, comfortable wife and well-fed, industrious children, was surveying that year of revolu-

tions (in Mrs. Harris's opinion, all the work of the nasty, hojus Jews) with a contented smirk and a reflection that there was, after all, no place like home.

Soon Ruskin would write: 'You must be clear about *Punch*'s politics. He is a polite Whig, with a sentimental respect for the Crown, and a practical respect for property. He steadily flatters Lord Palmerston, from his heart adores Mr. Gladstone. Steadily, but not virulently, caricatures Mr. D'Israeli; violently and

virulently castigates assault upon property in any kind, and holds up for the general idea of perfection, to be aimed at by all the children of heaven and earth, the British Hunting Squire, the British Colonel, and the British Sailor.'



N A MANNER of speaking Sugar Fisher was lucky. I guess Sugar got the breaks. Wasn't it a swell break, being born with that red wig of hers? Just in time for Technicolor, I mean. Those legs too: I reckon they didn't need to be in time for anything. Don't get me wrong. Legs are legs, but you got to use your nut if you want to make the grade in Hollywood. Ambitious, that's what Sugar was, right from the word go. I remember her when we were rooming together back in Ohio. Looking at a still of Garbo, we were.

'I'll knock that bass canary cold,' says Sugar.

That was when we were in a stock company; that's how I met Sugar Fisher. No, I reckon she never did talk much about being a kid. All I know is, she was raised in Kansas; her old man was a pants-presser. Sugar used to say that was a break too. You got to have a pants-presser or a cow-puncher or somebody like that in the family if you want to be a film star. She had it all figured out.

'Listen, honey,' she says, 'stars ain't born, and this job ain't gonna blow me out to three columns. Ain't

no talent scout gonna stop here for gas. I gotta park right out in the traffic.'

I reckon she was right. Look at the big stars. Telephone operators, lift-girls, airline hostesses, that's how they all start. A girl don't stand a chance playing round on the stage being an actress. Take a look at the men too. Nelson Eddy—worked in an iron foundry, he did. Wallace Beery was an engine wiper on a railway and an elephant trainer. Maybe that gave Sugar the idea. Maybe I should've done same as her. I didn't use my nut right.

'Guess I'll tag along with the stock company,' I said.

Look at me now—a bit player! And look at Sugar—the Copper Cleopatra!

Anyhow, one day Sugar beats it.

'So long, honey,' she says, 'I'm gonna blow. It's me for the neon signs.'

Next thing I hear, she's in Hickok's Circus, wearing a pair of spangled pants and handing torches and striped balls to the sea-lion trainer. That was the year Al Klitz was making 'Tropic Follies': 1936, I guess. Didn't I tell you Sugar got the breaks? Klitz wants a sea-lion, special shade, special flippers, special whiskers, and the talent scouts are out combing the circuses. One comes in to Hickok's, and his eyes kind of stray over to Sugar's legs.

'That certainly is a sweet pair of flippers,' he says.

Just then one of the sea-lions takes a bite out of Sugar's pants.

'That dame certainly has what it needs,' says the talent scout. At the end of the act he goes round back-stage and finds Sugar bawling out the trainer.

'I'm no whitebait,' says Sugar, 'I quit.'

'Okay,' says the trainer, 'scram, you're poisoning my sea-lions.'

'Relax, sister,' says the talent scout, 'stop having kittens. Your lion-feeding days is over.'

Remember Sugar's first part? The curtain goes up and there's an iceberg all cut out in steps, and on each step there's one of the Klitz Kuties in a black sealion outfit, and right up top there's Sugar in a gold sea-lion outfit doing a dance with a big black and gold striped ball. Then the iceberg turns round and it's the Capitol at Washington, and there's the Klitz Kuties lined up each side, one side dressed in stars and the other stripes, and Sugar coming down the steps in the middle as Miss Abraham Lincoln. There were plenty more patriotic pictures later, but 'Tropic Follies' was the first; a knock-out it was. After that Sugar was on all the magazine covers, swimming in her private pool with her pet sea-lion. Pretty soon she got wise to the sea-lion. Next time the photographer comes round Sugar yells she wants her picture took solo.

'That goddam seal gets in my hair,' she says, 'he's getting all the icing.'

So the sea-lion is out, and that week Sugar is on the covers alone, waving from a yacht. But she doesn't wear a skirt yet. You got to make the headlines for a year or two before the fans will stand for a skirt. Still she was doing pretty good. Next picture she was in was another Technicolor musical, 'In Old Versailles.' Remember that bit at the beginning?

'To the historians of all ages, all races, all climes, patient and untiring men selflessly labouring without reward to reveal to the eyes of their fellows the glorious story of noble, pitiful, heroic suffering humanity, this picture is humbly and gratefully dedicated.'

That was the movie where she made a smash hit singing 'You're Growing On Me':

You grow on me
Like the blossom on the tree,
Like the sting upon the bee,
You're growing on me.
I never suspected
We'd rub along so fine,
But now we're connected
I ain't never gonna change the line.
You grow on me
Like the sausage on the mash,
Like the corned beef on the hash,
You're growing on me, Oh Baby,
You're growing on me.

After that it certainly began to look like Sugar was headed high. Next thing, she runs into Siddons De Salver: Starmaker De Salver, they called him. Sugar told me:

'I'm walking offa the set when up comes a kinda big city torpedo and stops me. "Hiya, Picklepuss," I says. So he give me the once-over, slow-like, and "Baby!" he says, "I'm gonna groom you for stardom."

You got to hand it to Sugar; she got the breaks, but she was smart too. All that year—1937 I guess it was—she acted like she never drunk anything but champagne. Every night you could bet your bottom dollar she was hoofing it at one of the classy night-clubs; yes, she certainly gave the folks an eyeful that year. 'Sugar Fisher's individualised off-centre look is achieved by a draped Amazon corsage topped by a chunky hat in tow trimmed with three stuffed bobolinks'—the magazines were full of dope about her

clothes. She began getting a big fan mail too. That was okay till a couple of hundred members of the Sugar Fisher Fan Club showed up at the studio. Sugar did her stuff, but she was mad at her publicity man after they pulled out.

'Listen,' says Sugar, 'you let that buncha dumb clucks loose in my yard just once more, and I'm gonna

bounce a blackjack right on your derby.'

Sugar did some big musicals round then. Remember her as Lady Godiva? Sugar gave them all she had that time. I heard they had a peck of trouble over that piece where she rides through her home-town in her wig.

'Listen,' says the director, 'you left off your ermine coat, you left off your gold lamé negligee, you left off your triple ninon pants, you left off everything except your beautiful red hair, all for the sake of them bums, see?'

Sugar just laughs. So they play the Victrola for a spell to get her in the mood. Sugar asks for 'I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby,' and they play that over seven or eight times.

'I still don't get it,' says Sugar.

Well, they're all practically bughouse when the clapper boy looks at Sugar and says:

'Betya Garbo could do it,' he says.

'That big palooka!' says Sugar. 'Hold my pants and bring out the broncho.'

When Sugar went to make her footprint in the concrete at Grauman's Chinese Theatre, she took her shoe and stocking off in memory of Lady Godiva. Yes, Sugar was a big shot. She was such a big shot you'd think she could quit playing smart and take it easy. That was the year every blonde in the country was having her hair cut in the Godiva Long Droop. Don

Damian was supposed to be carrying a torch for Sugar; I got it in my head they were going to stage a phoney elopement. Sugar wasn't so dumb. She had a hunch you couldn't pull that elopement gag any more. De Salver had a hunch too. De Salver always said you could trust the public like you trust a rattlesnake. This time he said the public wanted a new dish. They got it all right.

One day Sugar makes the headlines in a big new way. 'Fisher in Ten-Minute Tussle,' they say; 'Fisher Tweaks Noses, Tears Hair.' Soon they got round to it: 'Fisher Can Take It.' That was it: Sugar could take it. Back in 1938, that must've been. Sugar didn't make any more musicals, she didn't hand out any more glamour. She was too busy taking it. Remember how the fans used to read about her bedroom with the Love-in-a-Mist satin sheets? Now all they wanted to know was how many black eyes she got in 'Sock That Dame!' Kind of tickled them, figuring she was no quitter. I reckon Sugar got a couple of dozen teeth knocked out by the publicity boys that year: the Game Dame, somebody called her. Course she had to be able to dish it out too. Ever see 'Bombay Duck'? Upset a hamburger stand over the society cadavers in that, she did. In 'Boom-De-Ay' she bit Don Damian in the calf, kicked him in the groin, pushed him under a street car and cracked a dinner service over his head, plate by plate. Damian was a big guy too. There was a craze just about then for adding up how heavy the actors were. In 'Lightweight Love' they had a radio comedian who weighed 245 pounds, a 233-pound wrestler, and a couple of 200-pound stars. Altogether they reckoned they got three tons of cast. They were sold on earthquakes and hurricanes and tidal waves too. There was

one gag when a cameraman waited thirteen weeks in a concrete dump for a typhoon, and the director went down in a diving-bell to referee a match between some French guy and an octopus. Sugar never fought no octopus, but she shot it out with pretty well everything else. She said it when they interviewed her about 'Dead-Eye Daisy':

'I have to be a woman who can take care of herself in a dangerous and violent world; a creature indomitable, rugged, fearless, yet at the same time woman enough to conquer men with such harmless weapons as well-baked pies. How'm I doing, boys,' says Sugar,

'how's that for a bit of the old crappo?'

That's how it was with Sugar: she'd be okay, then she'd forget and spill it. You got to watch your step all the time if you're a star. The fans got a kick seeing Sugar play the hellcat in the movies, but they hadn't laid off thinking she was some kind of angel. One day Sugar gets a fan letter that gives her a scare.

'Why must you lower yourself,' it says, 'by drinking rye? I felt so sad when I saw you giving way to that dreadful craving in "Six-Gun Sal." Please, please, for your own sake fight it.'

De Salver sees the red light, so he cuts the hooch out of Sugar's next part and puts a bit in where she pitches a teapot at the bell-hop in a luxury hotel. 1939, that was. I remember because the magazines got a new angle on her that year. Sugar was a star, Sugar was lousy with dough, sure, but really she was just a sweet American girl.

'Sugar,' says one of them, 'is a regular guy. She never whines if things go wrong, if instead of spending a happy, restful evening at home fixing the corned beef hash, she has to don an evening gown and drink champagne at a night club. When asked her ambition in life she sighs and talks about running a chicken-farm, ". . . just a little one, with lots and lots of baby chicks." Then she squares her lovely shoulders and says: "But I've got to go through with this first." No doubt of it, Sugar is a thoroughbred.

Soon the fans were beginning to feel sorry for Sugar. One magazine had a picture of her frying ham and eggs in the kitchen, and underneath it said: 'The Gingham Girl in the Golden Chains.' She made some swell movies that year. Real class, with no rough stuff. Remember her as the telephone girl in 'Troubled'? They got the earphones she wore in the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art, along with Dorothy Lamour's sarong. After that she was on the covers wearing a hostess gown and no legs; yes, Sugar was the tops. But she didn't sit back even then. I told you she was ambitious. One day she's coming off the set when De Salver stops her again.

'Sugar,' he says, 'I'm gonna teach you to read.'

'You and who else?' says Sugar.

But she got the idea. By 1940 Sugar was the intellectual type and the fans were getting a plateful of

uplift.

'Right now,' says Sugar in her last interview, 'I am deep in aerodynamics. It's keen. As a relaxation, I am reading the Upanishads. And if you meet the big dope who wrote 'em,' says Sugar, 'you can clap him in the kisser for me.'

Well, that's where Sugar is still, right at the top. The publicity boys say she's staking a claim to play Purple McGrew. The danger is Chubby Pinker. Chubby's the youngest star in Hollywood; eleven

months old last week; but they're gambling on her using toenail varnish, time they get all the cast hired. All the same, you got to reckon with Sugar. You got to remember what she says:

'I'm no angel—not yet.'

THE CONFESSION OF A MURDERER

did exp will Far

did not find Miss Holland as generous as I expected; in fact, as her banking account will show, until we actually went to the Moat Farm she drew but very little money out of

the bank. At this time our expenses were heavy, because, between the time we went to Hassocks and the period when we lived with Mrs. Wisken at Saffron Walden, we went about a great deal and most of the expenses were paid by me.

I didn't have very much money, but what I did have I soon got through, and that was why I suggested that we should buy a farm. I told her that my father would not live long, and that upon his death I was entitled to a large sum of money, and I further showed her a claim I had against the War Office for arrears of pay due to me. She was a very careful old lady¹, and she examined the documents I produced to her very carefully. I did not like this because I was afraid that she would detect erasures and alterations in some of them, so I rather resented the way in which she received the statements I made, and, finding that I was rather cross, she said she would never doubt me again, but put the utmost faith in me. If she drew any money out of the bank she was very careful

About fifty-six; she was the mistress of the narrator.

with it, and used to jot down on a little slip of paper even items for a shilling or so, and, therefore, I thought that the sooner I got her to buy either a business or a farm the sooner I should be able to deal with the profits and so have some money for myself. Of course, I told her that I had managed a large estate, and that I could, if I obtained a suitable farm, make it very profitable, and that instead of growing oats and wheat I should grow mushrooms, tomatoes and cucumbers, and cultivate bees and flowers, and by watching the markets we could send the produce to be sold only when the demand

sent up prices.

Of course, I never intended to do anything of the kind, my intention being to get her to buy the farm and transfer it to me, whereupon I meant to sell it. She was an excellent business woman, and she accompanied me on several occasions to look at different farms in various. parts of Essex, Sussex, and Kent. At this time I meant to get hold, if possible, of all her property, and, therefore, I did not want an ordinary farm, where there would be a lot of prying neighbours, or where it would be easy to get to. I should think we saw about a dozen farms altogether, but none of them suited me until I came across the Moat House Farm, which at that time was called Coldham's or Saville's Farm. It was just the place I wanted, and I thought the moat would be very useful, because after the farm had been transferred to me I thought it might be easy for the lady to be found in the moat. There were many ways of leaving the farm without being seen, which acted as a powerful inducement for me to take it, and when she complained of its loneliness I said that that was its charm, because we should be able to live there together away from any inquisitive strangers. Everything went all right up to the time that

the farm was purchased, and I certainly did intend that the deeds should be made out in my name, but to this Miss Holland would not consent, nor would she pay the deposit in my name, and, therefore, all the visions I had had of getting hold of the farm, turning her out, and selling it melted away. I could see she intended to be master, and that she had been so in the habit, during her life, of doing her own business that, even if we did make any profit, it would be she who would be handling the money. In choosing the Moat House Farm I thought it would be a nice place to leave her while I went up to London to negotiate for the sale of the farm produce when, of course, I intended to have a good time.

We paid many visits to the Moat House Farm before we actually took possession, and, finding she was so tight-fisted, I began to think of various schemes to put her out of the way, but I thought I would wait a little while and see if she altered. I think she was naturally very mean, and on one or two occasions even Mrs. Wisken (the landlady who lives in Market Row, Saffron Walden) had one or two disputes with her about little items in our bill. It was strange to find a woman so mean, because otherwise she was not so bad, and she would often try, when I was miserable or down in the dumps, to cheer me up by playing or singing to me. She was old-fashioned in a lot of her ways, and when I suggested that she should buy herself new dresses and wear more fashionable clothes, she said she would wear what she liked, and that she did not want to be in the fashion, and that if two people were fond of each other it did not matter what they wore. She had a lot of clothing belonging to her aunt, and she was always twisting, mending, and altering a lot of old dresses that I wouldn't have given house-room to. She was rather

snappy at times, and if I didn't quite agree with everything she said she would bounce out of the room, throw up her head, march upstairs to the bedroom, and spend the day reading a novel. Perhaps towards the evening she would get over her temper, and then she would come downstairs and plead for forgiveness.

I didn't mind these fits of temper, because they gave me an opportunity of clearing out and having a good day and a game or two of billiards. We had one or two quarrels when we were living at Saffron Walden, but they were principally about money matters, because by this time she expected that my claim against the War Office would be settled, and that I should be in a position to help her to stock the farm. I was rather glad when we got to the Moat Farm, but instead of improving she got worse, and one day when I went to Bishop's Stortford to buy some farm implements she complained that I had spent two or three pounds in what she called waste. I was drinking then very heavily, because I had made up my mind by this time to either get a lump sum out of her and clear out, or put her out of the way and have the lot. I certainly thought she had more money than she did, and although we were such great friends, it was not without the greatest trouble that I got to know all about her financial position. She kept her cheque book, pass book, and the details of the shares and stocks she held locked up in a little desk, and she carried the key on a chain attached to a ring in her pocket.

I made up my mind at last that there was only one way out of the difficulty I was in, and that was to put her out of the way. I used to sit and think about it for hours, because, although I had done a lot of things during my life, I couldn't quite make up my mind to go so far as to murder her. I thought once that I would have a bit of

an accident, and that I would contrive to get her out of the house in her nightdress so that she might be found drowned in the moat, and that at the inquest I could say she was in the habit of walking in her sleep, and had, no doubt, fallen into the moat. But when I came to examine the water I found it was only about a foot or so deep, and that the mud had been allowed for years to settle at the bottom. I did not quite see my way clear to do the job this way, because I wanted, if possible, to avoid publicity. If there had been an inquest, I thought her relatives would be sure to see it in the newspaper, and that was what I wanted to avoid, if possible. I thought of such a lot of plans for getting rid of her, and once I almost decided to let her shoot herself, only she had such a horror of firearms that she would not let me even keep them in the house. I thought I could get her in one of the rooms alone, and while I was fiddling about with the revolver I would contrive to fire it off just as one of the servants came into the room, so that she could give evidence that it was an accident, but again I thought of the inquest.

I tried to get her to make a will, leaving everything to me, while I made one also, leaving everything to her, but she told me she had already made her will, and that she did not intend to alter it. All this caused me a lot of trouble, and I used to sit for hours and hours conjuring up all kinds of schemes to get rid of her. At this time I got positively to hate her, and when we actually moved into the farm I had definitely decided what I should do. I thought that a good place to bury her would be the ditch, and that was why the very first week we were at the farm I gave orders for it to be filled in. It certainly was unsightly, and I thought that in the summertime it would smell very unpleasantly, so I determined

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to drain the farmyard and the pond by the side of the barn into a ditch which ran by the side of a hedge.

Although she knew nothing about it, she came out of the house and stood by the side of the ditch whilst I and Pilgrim, the labourer, were discussing the best way to fill it up. The elder tree stood by the side, and I can see her there now, holding one of the boughs, and arguing against the ditch being filled in until proper arrangements had been made for draining it another way. Pilgrim the labourer said the proper way to do the job was to make the new drain first and then fill in the ditch, but I had made up my mind what I was going to do with her, so it did not suit my purpose to accept his advice, and I insisted on the work being commenced at once, although I did not want the filling-in completed.

Unknown to Miss Holland, I had made arrangements for my wife to come and live in one of the villages near the farm, in order that she might be near me and I could see her. I told her that Miss Holland was an old lady who was going to finance me, and that she would not be with me long, as she was going to take a voyage round the world for the benefit of her health. I had at this time, as I have already said, made up my mind how I should get rid of Miss Holland, and, in order to carry out my plans, the first week that I was at the farm I kept a look-out as I drove through the villages for a little cottage where I could put my wife until the job was over and I could have her at the farm.

It is quite true that I took the house, and that Mrs. Dougal moved in when we had been at the farm about a fortnight, and as I knew I was going to take her up to the farm in a very short time, I did think it would be waste of time to unpack the furniture which my wife took to the cottage, so it was left exactly as she brought

it with her. I don't think my wife quite believed the story I told her about Miss Holland's financing me, and when she had been in the house about a week she said she was coming up to the farm to see what I was doing. Of course, if she had done this it would have upset my plans, and that is why I made up my mind at last to put Miss Holland out of the way.

I don't think I should have done it had I not been drinking, but the more drink I had the more determined I became and the easier it looked. I wanted money very badly then, and I made one final appeal to Miss Holland to let me have some money until I got my dispute with the War Office settled, but she refused, and told me that she knew all I wanted was to spend it in drink. She was so mean that she would not trust me with even the wages to pay the farm hands, and at last I was pushed in such a corner that I determined to finish the matter that week.

Miss Holland and I had not been at the farm more than three weeks then, and I knew that if I did not soon put her out of the way more people would get to know that she was there, so on the Monday night I meant to shoot her the first opportunity I got. Of course, I know all about firearms, and when the wind was in a certain direction I fired the revolver off several times in the coach-house, in order to see if any one heard it while they were in the back of the house. I was very glad to find that neither Miss Holland nor the servant heard any report, and I placed the revolver, fully loaded, and some cartridges on a shelf in the coach-house ready for me when I wanted it. It was there seven or eight days before I finally used it, and now and then I would have a shot or two just to see if I still had my old skill of being able to make sure of hitting anything at twenty yards.

What that servant girl Blackwell says about going to her door is about right, although I think she exaggerates a little. I had had a skinful of brandy that night, and I don't quite remember what took place, but I know that Miss Holland, when she discovered what I had done, said she would have the farm sold, and that she would not live with me a day longer. She slept with the servant girl that night, and so she did on the Wednesday and on the Thursday.

We had quite a row, and she accused me of a lot of things. Of course, I declared that the servant's story was a lie from top to bottom, but she stuck up for the girl, and she made herself so ill that she cried very nearly the whole of one day. On Friday morning we had made it up, and I was anxious to do this because if she had carried out her original intentions she was going to send a telegram to her solicitor instructing him to get rid of the farm, as she had determined to leave me. I determined that that telegram should not go, so I kept my eye on the servant and on Miss Holland the whole of the time. We had breakfast together on Friday morning, and I then told her that my claim against the War Office had been settled, and, in future, I should devote myself to the farm, and that in order to avoid a repetition of the Blackwell girl incident, we would only employ servants of mature age. I got round her by lunch time, and we made up our quarrel and she had forgiven me, and that was why we thought of going for a drive. I knew the servant had written to her mother to come down to the farm and fetch her away, and it was my original intention to drive away with Miss Holland, and to keep out of the way until the servant had gone, but a little incident caused a change in my plans. It is quite true Miss Holland did intend to go into the village and do a little

shopping, but I started on the drink again and, having left her in Stanstead, I drove the pony a short distance, put it up at a public-house, and then I walked across the road and called on my wife.

I don't know what made me do this, but I was worried about her, and I thought she might come over to the farm, and I did this to keep matters quiet. When I got outside my wife's cottage I was suddenly confronted by Miss Holland, who demanded to know where I had been, and why I had left her and had driven off. I was a little bit confused for the moment, but I was able to say that I had gone to the cottage for the purpose of seeing a woman who wanted a situation as a servant, which appeared to satisfy her, and we got up in the trap and drove towards home. I had made up my mind then that this should be the last drive Miss Holland should ever have, because as we were driving along she started to nag me again, and she was jawing me all the time we were in the Chequers, the public-house where we had some whisky. We got in the trap again, and as it was a beautiful night we let the horse walk slowly home, and I should think it was about a quarter-past eight when we got back to the farm. When I had taken the horse out I thought she would go in the house, but instead of that she made some remark about its being a beautiful moonlight night.

I had pushed the trap into the coach-house by this time, and I could see by the light at the back of the house that the servant girl was still there doing her work. I stepped up on the side of the trap, reached down the revolver and, as Miss Holland stood just near the door looking at the moon, I shot her. I wasn't standing very far from her, and, of course, I was a little higher, because I was still on the step of the trap. She

dropped just like a log, and then I pulled her into the coach-house.

If I live to be a thousand years old I shall never forget the feeling as I caught hold of both her hands and drew her along until I got her into the coach-house. All kinds of things came into my mind, and my heart seemed almost to stand still as I put my hand inside her dress to feel if her heart was beating. Of course, I knew that she was dead, and yet I don't know what made me do it, but I knelt down on one knee and pulled up her head and asked her to speak if she could. Why I did this I cannot tell you; but just at that moment I thought I heard something move outside, so I kicked one of the cushions towards her head, and put my hand underneath her neck, and I lifted her head up and put the cushion underneath.

I didn't think this was of much use, and why I did it I can't tell even now, but I thought for a moment that she might come to, because there was no blood about, and I wasn't quite certain where the bullet had struck her.

Then, all of a sudden, I remembered that the noise of the pistol might reach the back kitchen, where I knew the girl would be having her supper, so I stepped outside, put the revolver in my pocket, pushed the doors to, and then went into the house. I lifted up the latch that was fixed to the gate at the entrance of the moat-bridge, but almost immediately even this noise seemed to frighten me, for I stood still and listened. I could not turn my head towards the coach-house, and great beads of perspiration began to run down my back, for I had a most peculiar sensation as if someone was following me. I thought the doors of the coach-house had opened and she was walking out after me; I could almost feel her

touch me, and as true as there is a God in Heaven, I was ready to drop. I must have stood there some seconds and then I put my hand into my pocket and drew out the revolver and turned round and looked straight at the coach-house. I could not quite get out of my mind, nor get rid of the feeling, that something or someone besides myself stood between me and the coach-house. I had still an impression that someone would come towards me, so I levelled up the revolver and stood there with it in my hand.

I don't think I could have uttered a word to have saved my life, my tongue was like a great ball of fire, and I quite hurt myself trying to get some saliva to moisten my mouth and my parched tongue. Then I remembered how silly it was; of course, there was no one, and I put the revolver back into my pocket and walked into the house.

We usually kept some brandy in a decanter in the sitting-room, so I pushed the door open and I picked up the decanter without waiting for a glass. I think I must have gulped down half of its contents. This seemed to steady me, and I walked along the passage, expecting to see the girl standing there watching me.

She was still going on with her work, and I looked at her to see if I could read in her face whether she knew what had happened outside. Thank God, her first words were 'Where's the mistress?', and I was just able to jerk out she has gone to London. I really believe that at that moment if I had even a suspicion that she knew anything about what had occurred, I should have shot her, and I knew that would not do, because she had written to her mother to come and fetch her away, and I knew the mother would sure to be there, so I need hardly tell you how thankful I was when the girl went

back to the kitchen, making some remark about she thought it was very unkind of 'Mrs. Dougal' to go to London and leave her in the house after what had happened. I don't know quite what I said, but I think I made some remark about its being all right, because the mistress would return and be there before we went to bed. I asked her whether she did not hear me drive in, and she said: 'No, I have been working in the kitchen.' I felt quite relieved when she said this; but as I walked away into the front of the house I stopped and listened once or twice, because I fancied she might follow me and watch what I was doing, but she went on with her work just as if nothing unusual had happened, and I could see she really believed what I said, viz., that her mistress had gone to London.

Every few minutes I broke into a violent perspiration, and then my tongue would become so hot and my lips so dry that I had to rub them with my fingers to get some feeling into them. I seized the brandy bottle again, and I had another good swig at it, and then, I don't know why, but I thought it might be all a mistake; that perhaps, after all, the bullet hadn't struck her, and that she had only fainted, and she might come to if I gave her some brandy, so I caught hold of the decanter and walked across with it in my hand to the coach-house; but I couldn't make up my mind for a second or two to go inside. I called out 'Cecily, Cecily,' and then I listened, but I had another drop of brandy, and I thought what a fool I was, because everything had gone just as I had planned it, and there was not a living soul save the servant girl near, and I had nothing to fear.

Then I went into the coach-house; but it was dark, and I pushed the door further open so that some of the light from the moon would come in. She was in exactly

the same position as I had left her, so I knelt down and poured some of the brandy over her face, thinking, perhaps, it might revive her; but really I knew this was impossible because she was dead. I tried to sit her up, but she fell back on the cushion, and I knew all was over then.

Of course, I had arranged everything, and had started the work of filling in the ditch, and I had mapped out days before where I was going to bury her; but I sat down and began thinking over new schemes, and every few minutes I kept touching her and feeling her pulse and speaking to her. I don't know how it was, but I wanted to get away from her side, and yet I was afraid. Something seemed to keep me there, to make me keep looking at her, wondering whether she would move, and yet I knew that this was impossible. I went outside the coach-house and walked down towards the lower moat to see if the girl was still in the kitchen, and I could hear her moving about, humming to herself.

I stood by the side of the hedge for quite half an hour, thinking over all kinds of methods and ways of getting rid of the body, but somehow I had to go back to the coach-house. Why I did this I can't tell you, but it seemed as if something was dragging me there, and I kept fancying that the girl would come out and go into the coach-house and find out what had happened. I daresay she is right when she says that I came back in about half an hour, because I wanted to go into the house again and make myself certain that she did not suspect that her mistress was lying in the coach-house dead. I had to make some excuse, so I told her that I was going to the station to meet a train and bring her mistress back. I was in the house, I think, about a quarter of an hour, and I opened another bottle of

brandy and filled up the decanter so that the girl should not notice that it was all gone.

When I left the house this time I had another good drink of brandy, but although it was neat it seemed to have no impression upon me. I could not get rid of the burning sensation in my throat, and I kept on walking backwards and forwards outside the coach-house, fancying every minute that someone would come along or that the doors would open and I should find myself forced to use my revolver again. I went into the coach-house and put the revolver on the shelf, but I had to go back for it again and put it in my pocket, and practically I kept it there all the night.

I tried to smoke a cigar, but I had to light it a dozen times, because I forgot all about it and it went out. I walked round the farm buildings. I pushed open the doors to see if anyone was inside, and then I went into the house again and told the girl that her mistress had not come, but I thought she might come by the train that got in just after ten o'clock. Once or twice a feeling came over me that the girl was deceiving me, and that she was watching me as I walked about the farm, so the next time I left I stood on the moat-bridge in the shadow of the trees and watched the front door to see if she came out. I grew very nervous, and I kept fancying that if I went away very far from the coach-house she would be sure to come out and go in there.

Again I began to conjure up all kinds of possible ways of getting rid of the body, and I made up my mind that it would be best not to put her in the ditch, but to take her away and bury her somewhere else. I looked about the farm for a fork, and when I found one I thought I would go up into the fields and dig a hole and put her in. I did go, perhaps, a hundred yards along the hedge

of the big field, trying to pick out a spot where the ground was soft, and I could dig a grave, but try my hardest, I was obliged to go back to the coach-house, and then I had another good dose of brandy, and I determined to carry her up into the fields. I took off her hat and her veil and the jacket she was wearing, and I picked her up in my arms and walked down by the side of the little moat. Her head was leaning over my shoulder, and as I carried her along I wished there was a great big furnace there that I could put her in and watch her burn. I thought of cutting her up into pieces and putting her into the moat, but I thought of the time it would take me, and I was afraid of being interrupted.

She seemed so heavy, and when I got up into the fields I sat her down and put her head against the bank that runs up at the side of the hedge. I got hold of the fork and I stuck it in the ground once or twice, but I thought it would be no good, because the hole would sure to be seen by some of the labourers as they crossed the fields to work. I could not make up my mind what to do with her, so I laid her flat on her back and went back to the house again to get some more brandy, for I was shaking from head to foot. I kept burying my nails into my flesh as I walked along, and I had to close my mouth to prevent my teeth chattering. What I said this time I am not quite certain, but I know I said I expected the mistress would come by the twelve o'clock train, and I pretended that the pony and trap was outside waiting for me to drive to the station again.

When I left the house this time I went to the side of the ditch, and I thought that after all it would be the safest way to get rid of her; but somehow I wanted to bury her out of sight, and yet I wanted to keep her by the side of me, so I went back to the field and picked her

up again and carried her over to one of the haystacks, where I put her down and left her while I went and got some straw and threw it into the ditch.

I went back to the haystack; picked her up and found then that she was getting cold and stiff, for there was a strong breeze blowing, and it was rather a cold night. It was a horrible sight to see her lying on the ground, and before I picked her up the last time I wished that she was alive again, because I thought, after all, she hadn't done me any harm, so I knelt down and kissed her once or twice. All the good times we had seemed to come back to me, and I remembered that once or twice when I had been queer through the drink she had nursed me and tried to get me well, and that, after all, it was a bit hard to do her in.

But then I began to think what would happen to me if she was found. I should certainly be accused of the crime, and what could I say after I had told the servant that she had gone to London? I thought I would hide her in the haystack for a few days, but finally I made up my mind that I would get rid of her once and for all, so I picked her up again and carried her back into the coach-house, and laid her down on the cushions.

I went and got the fork, and I carried some straw and laid it down at the bottom of the ditch. I think the brandy then began to have some effect upon me, and I grew more brutal, and I began to think of the way she had nagged me, and the difficulty I had in getting money from her, and the way she had shown me up before the servant, so I caught hold of her hand and pulled the ring off her finger. She was very fond of this ring; it had been given to her by the only man I really believe she ever loved.

I asked her to tell me the story one day, and she

said that while her aunt kept a ladies' school at Liverpool, she used to help her in the management, and, whilst doing so, she grew very fond of one of the pupils, who was about the same age as herself. This young lady had a brother who was a midshipman, and when he wrote her letters she used to read them to Miss Holland, and gradually she grew to love the absent sailor. When the pupil went home for her summer holidays she took Miss Holland with her, and introduced her to her brother. who had returned home from a voyage. Miss Holland and the young man fell in love with each other almost at first sight, and he vowed that he would make his fortune abroad and return and marry her. He had some relatives in the West Indies, and he went out there shortly afterwards and took up some kind of post. He used to write letters to Miss Holland; but just when everything looked bright he was drowned through the upsetting of a yacht, and his body was not recovered for some days. When it was found, the ring that he wore on his finger was taken off and sent home to his parents, who gave it to Miss Holland, and I think she had some kind of monogram or crest engraved upon it. I took it off her finger, and just as I did so a stray moonbeam came through one of the cracks of the door and played about her face, and it made me guite shudder. Also I put my hand down and caught hold of the gold cross that was round her neck and wrenched it off, snapping the chain on which it used to hang round her neck. I had another drop of brandy then, and I turned her over, put my hand in her pocket and took her purse. I don't think I knew what I was doing then, and my first intention was to strip everything off her; but I sat down and looked at her, and thought I would let her be just as she was.

I picked her up in my arms, and, just as you would carry a baby, I carried her out of the coach-house and laid her on the straw which I had put in the ditch. Then a change came over me, but the more brandy I drank the more brutal and wicked I seemed to get. One minute I wanted to kiss her, and the next minute I wanted to pitch a lot of mould over her, but at last I made up my mind that I would bury her and get her out of sight. I thought of what had happened but a few days before, when she stood by the side of the ditch talking to Pilgrim and myself about filling in the ditch.

I thought, perhaps, unless I covered her over, the fowls would scratch away the straw, so I got some brambles and twigs and pieces of wood, and I stretched them over her body and then put some more straw on top, so that the body would be hidden. Then I made up my mind to go into the house again and tell the servant that I had been to the station, and that there was no possibility of her mistress coming, that evidently she had lost the train, and that she had better go to bed. I went outside and I picked up the fork, and I put a thin layer of earth over the top of the brambles and straw, and I went back into the house and had some more brandy, and then I went to bed. . . .

I couldn't sleep; and I got up and walked round the farm and down to the road and back again. I couldn't keep my eyes off the ditch; and I kept thinking that perhaps the fowls would get loose and they would scratch the mould away, so I got down into the ditch and kicked some more earth over her until it was about a foot deep. Once or twice I was tempted to pull the straw away and have another look at her face, but I tore myself away and walked about the farm; and I was glad when daylight

came, because I made myself some breakfast, and I called the girl at half-past six.

I am sure I aged that night twenty years. I never closed my eyes the whole night long, and I could not keep still or rest for even a quarter of an hour. I tried to read, I tried to write, I tried to sleep, but it was all in vain. Not one single moment's peace did I have, and I am sure that if I went once to the ditch I went twenty times.

I now began to wish that all traces of this night were obliterated, and I was tempted once or twice to pitch the ring and the cross into the moat, but somehow I could not do it. When the girl got up I told her that I had received a letter from her mistress, and that she had gone for a little holiday and that she was going to send a lady friend down.

Of course, you must remember that I now went back to my original plan, viz., that as soon as Miss Holland had been put out of the way I should bring my wife to the farm. I thought how well things were shaping, because directly after the servant girl had gone away I determined to send for Mrs. Dougal.

I could not eat any breakfast myself, so I walked out and went down towards the little moat, and as I did so I met Law, one of my labourers, and the first job I put him on was doing a little more towards filling in the ditch. I directed him to get some earth from the side of the pathway that leads to the front of the road, and he did so, and I watched him turn about a dozen barrows into the ditch.

Quite a pleasant feeling came over me as I watched the barrows of mould and stones turned on the top of the body, and I kept wishing that they were ten times as big, so that they would fill in more quickly. Yet I daren't be too eager, because I was afraid that I might create some suspicion if I was too eager and too anxious to get the ditch filled in; so when Law had turned over a good number of barrows, I told him that that would do for that day, because we could do some more later on.

I was very anxious to see the back of the servant girl, and, therefore, I was pleased when her mother came and took her away. I left them in the house alone and I drove away to see my wife and to tell her to make preparations to come to the farm, and as I drove back I met the servant and her mother going to the station. I knew the girl had not the slightest suspicion as to what had happened the previous night, because I felt certain that she would have raised an alarm when her mother came, and would have accused me to my face. When I got back to the farm I walked into the house, and I was quite pleased to find that there was no one there, and that I had it all to myself; but I had some strange feeling that, somehow or other, that servant girl would do me some harm.

It was a strange presentiment, and as the day went on I kept fancying she would come back and demand to know where her mistress was.

The first thing I did when I got into the house was to open Miss Holland's desk and go through a lot of her papers, in order to find out, if possible, how much money she had. She kept her accounts very neatly, but I was very disappointed when I found that she was not worth more than £6,000 or £7,000. I found a few bank-notes and a little gold at the bottom of the desk, and this I put into my pocket in order to pay the farm hands. I thought, perhaps, Miss Holland had some more cash concealed about the place somewhere, so I turned over her trunks and boxes, but I could not find any, and I

certainly did feel somewhat disappointed. I had by this time, of course, already thought out how I should deal with her property, and I determined, if possible, to realise a lump sum and clear out of the place. I did not like to begin dealing with it too early, and, therefore, I began to have another search in order to find some more money, which I knew she must have somewhere about the place. In fact, I devoted the whole of the Saturday afternoon to this search, and I was rewarded by finding a lettercase with about £50 or £60 in £5 notes in it. It was evident that Miss Holland had had this by her for some time, because the notes were twenty years old, and had evidently never been looked at for a considerable time.

I NOW BEGAN to practise signing Miss Holland's name; but it was a long time before I could do it to my satisfaction, because I don't know how it was, but my hand trembled more than ever it had before, and it used to take a lot of brandy for me to steady myself.

I used to have terrible dreams at night, and as I went about the house I used to fancy I could hear Miss Holland's voice. I think if I went once to look at the ditch I went a hundred times a day, and I am sure if any one had watched me they would have grown suspicious and thought that there must be something under that ditch.

Of course, everything had gone off just in the manner I had planned it, and I began to congratulate myself upon the plans I had laid and the way I had carried them out.

I come now to a terrible part of my life, because, however clever one may be and however well one's plans have been carried out, there always is the suspicion lurking at the back of your head that you may have made

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one little blunder which will lead to the truth coming out. I used to watch every post in order to see if there were any letters from Miss Holland's relatives; but I was glad to find that there were none, and that my plan of intercepting the letters had had the effect I wanted, viz., of letting her nephews think that she did not want to be bothered with letters.

I used to watch every person who came to the farm, because I was a bit suspicious that, perhaps, one of her nephews would turn up, and if he did I was ready with a story for him. I should have told him that his aunt had gone on a voyage with a seafaring friend. I determined, if anyone really did come to the farm, to clear out of it as soon as possible, because I knew that the way in which the negotiations for the sale of the farm and its transfer to her had been conducted would make it rather suspicious if she went away and left them in a muddle. I had plenty of time now to go through her papers, and about a week or a little over after she had been buried, I wrote to her bankers and got a cheque book. I now found that I could write her name very well; but if I had been drinking I had to copy it first with a fine nib and then go over it again with an ordinary pen.

It was rather an anxious time for me when I sent the first letter to her bankers, because I was not quite certain as to whether or not the imitation I made of her signature would pass the bank clerks. I thought the best thing to do would be to apply for a cheque-book first, and I was up early the following morning in order to watch for the post-girl, who used to come across the field with the letters.

The moment I saw the size of the envelope which she had in her hand I knew I was all right, and as soon as she turned her back I tore the envelope open and found the cheque-book inside, and I knew now that all was plain sailing, and that if I was careful and avoided making any mistakes I should still be able to keep up the deception that Miss Holland was living at the farm. About the beginning of June I made a cheque for £35 and signed it in Miss Holland's name, and with a letter I sent this to the bank, asking that £5 notes should be sent in return. The bank sent the money, but at the same time they asked that a fresh signature should be given, and it was this that led me to inventing the story that the difference in Miss Holland's signature was due to a sprained hand.

I had been drinking rather heavily about this time, and I could see that I must be careful, and that I should have to steady myself before I imitated her signature any more; but after this not one single signature was ever questioned, and I got so perfect in signing her name that I could sign it a couple of dozen times with but very little difference in them.

At this time I did not know very much about stocks and shares and transfers, so I made inquiries, and found out how they were dealt with, what brokers did, and thus I was able to give instructions to Messrs. Hart & Co. for the shares Miss Holland had to be sold. I took a lot of care in preparing those documents and letters, and sometimes, if I had been drinking too heavily, I used to have to wait until I had sobered down a little before I could sign some of them properly.

It would be very little use going through the various items and the large number of letters which I have signed in Miss Holland's name, because one incident is very much like the other, and but for the fact that my hand was a little steadier sometimes, there is no very great difference in the signatures which I forged.

At first I thought I would spend the money on the farm and make it a good paying property, but I am afraid that looking after a lot of farm labourers was not to my liking, and I let everything go, and I never worried myself about the crops. I couldn't waste my time discussing with a lot of thick-headed labourers whether it would be better to sow turnips instead of mangold-wurzels. The more I heard about farming the more I hated it, so I let all the land grow hay, which was very much cheaper, and which brought in a few pounds. For appearance sake I was forced to buy a few cattle, some sheep, and some pigs; but really I took very little interest in them at all.

It's all very well to try and drown your thoughts in drink, and, as sure as I am alive on this earth, no one tried harder than I did to banish entirely from my mind all recollections of that terrible night; but I found that it was physically impossible. It did not matter where I was, or who was with me, the moment there was a lull in the conversation, the moment my attention was taken from anything, away back to the farm went my thoughts, and again and again the whole of the incidents of the three weeks Miss Holland lived there came before me. Sometimes I would walk about the farm by myself, and if I did there was always that feeling that she was going to step out of the grave and touch me on the shoulder. There was always the feeling wherever I went that something was near me; that there was someone present beside myself, and yet I knew that there was not. I never could really make up my mind that she was dead. and yet I knew she was. As sure as I stand here, I can swear that I have gone into that coach-house hundreds and hundreds of times, expecting to see her lying on her back as I dragged her in after I had shot her. I knew

that I should not find her there, but nothing would make me believe this until I had gone in and seen for myself.

I did this two or three times a day sometimes, and all the time I knew that I had buried her in the ditch, and that she was still there. I have tried to reason with myself times out of number, but it was no good—I had to go into that coach-house and see for myself that she was not there.

Sometimes, when I have been walking along or sitting in a railway carriage, I have closed my eyes and tried to make myself believe that it was all a dream, and that Miss Holland wasn't dead, and it was some foolish thought that I had got into my mind. I have got up and said to myself: 'You are not a murderer, old man, whatever else you may be,' and then I have sat down again, and I have felt much better and more satisfied, but unfortunately this didn't last very long. A few minutes later my mind travelled back to May 19th, and there I could see myself loading the revolver in the morning, putting it on the shelf, and then taking the pony out of the trap, and standing on the step and shooting her. This ran through my mind thousands of times; but what caused me most trouble was dragging her into the coach-house and then carrying her up into the fields and then bringing her back, and then finally burying her. Why, three years after she had been dead, I could close my eyes and still feel that I had got her in my arms; I could still feel her head hanging over my shoulders, and I could still see her face as I laid her in the ditch.

At one time drink would send me to sleep, and, perhaps for a few hours I would forget all about the Moat Farm; but as time went on I found it impossible to get

a night's rest, and then I took to walking in my sleep, and I thought I should have gone mad when I found I was a somnambulist.

I remember one night I returned from London, and I don't think I was quite sober, and, after having a good look round, I went to bed, I should think about eleven o'clock. I remember quite well taking off my clothes and getting into bed, but just before daybreak I suddenly came to myself and I found that I was standing by the side of the ditch, and that a spade was in my hand. I was in my nightshirt, and I had got out of the bedroom, walked down the stairs, opened the door, crossed over the moat-bridge, gone into the coach-house, and then gone to the grave with the spade in my hand. I think I must have been standing there a long time, because I was very cold and my nightshirt was wet with dew. I shook from head to foot, and my teeth chattered, and I was aching in every limb when I awoke, so I pitched the spade back into the coach-house and went back to bed, and there I lay awake, counting the hours.

I was really afraid of myself, and I thought that one of these mornings the labourers would come in and find me standing there, and I thought of all kinds of methods to prevent myself being found there. The only way that I could prevent myself walking out to the ditch in my sleep was locking the gate at the entrance of the moatbridge. I put a bit of chain round it, and before I went to bed I used to see that it was padlocked. Although this did not prevent my walking in my sleep, it stopped me going out to the ditch, because I used to go right up to the gate, and as it was locked I feel certain I used to turn round and go back to bed. I know I did this because one day the gate was painted white, and when I woke up one morning I found my hands covered in white

paint, which showed that I had been down to the gate and tried to open it.

I got very ill about this time, and I felt certain that I should go mad if I did not do something to distract my thoughts. I thought I would go to Paris, and at last I made up my mind to get one big cheque cashed and go away for good.

This was about the end of 1901, when I think I got Miss Holland's brokers to sell nearly £1,500 worth of shares. I was going to take best part of this with me and abandon the farm altogether, and I packed up my bag, putting all the things I wanted in it, and I caught an early train to Newport Station.

At Liverpool Street I met some people I knew, and got on the drink again, but I managed to catch the midnight mail to Paris.

As I was going away I felt quite happy, and I thought I would leave everything and not a soul should know where I was, but when I landed in Paris a strange feeling came over me, and I began wondering what was happening at the Moat Farm. It was no good; I was obliged to go back, and after I had been in Paris a couple of days I started for home.

I had some extraordinary fancy that someone belonging to Miss Holland had come to the farm, and, not finding her there, was making inquiries, and that if I didn't get back at once the ditch would be opened and the secret of her disappearance solved. Although I caught an express at Liverpool Street, the train did not go fast enough, and, on the drive from the station, I wanted several times to get out and get in another conveyance.

WHEN Superintendent Pryke called at the farm I began to see danger, and I thought it best to leave the

farm once and for ever. I didn't know where I was going when I left it, and sometimes I didn't seem to care whether they found me out or whether they didn't. I was so tired of it all, and yet the moment I thought of a hand being placed on my shoulder I conjectured up all kinds of pictures. I have seen myself tried; I have heard myself sentenced, and I have felt myself standing on the scaffold with the rope round my neck. Yet when I was arrested I felt bound to make an effort to escape. I did not care very much about the forgery charges, because I knew that at the utmost it would only mean a short time of penal servitude, but every time I went into the court my heart was in my mouth almost, until I found that, in spite of their searching and digging, they hadn't touched the ditch.

When the body was found I made up my mind to put a bold face on it, but at times as I sat in my cell I often thought that, after all, I was only living a life of misery, and it would be better to end it.

Herbert Dougal, notorious in the annals of crime as the Moat Farm murderer. It is a remarkable document: not often is a page so curious scissored out of those never-ending volumes of human weakness which are written in the courts of law. Dougal apparently made several 'confessions' before this one, but if his hope was to get the case reconsidered as manslaughter it was vain. This account was published by the Sun newspaper after his execution on July 8, 1903. One would say that it reveals the essential truth about the murder, even if details here and there are incorrect. In any case, allowance must be made for the fact that more than four years had elapsed between the commission of the crime and the setting down of the confession. To Mr. Desmond MacCarthy we owe the preservation of the

document. Much impressed by it originally, he saved it and lent it to others; and some twelve years ago he reprinted it.

Dougal was a bull of a man with a saloon-bar charm which proved very useful in his numerous seductions of servant girls. From the age of twenty to forty he was in the Army. When he retired, on a pension and with a good record, he called himself 'Captain' Dougal, but he had never attained commissioned rank. During his forties he narrowly escaped prison on two or three occasions. Then his luck left him and he received twelve months' hard labour for forging and uttering a cheque, thereby losing his Army pension. When he made the acquaintance of Miss Camille Cecile Holland in 1898 he was turned fifty, very badly off, and reckless; the six or seven thousand pounds which she possessed—though he thought she had more attracted him powerfully. He persuaded her to leave her Maida Vale boarding house, and they lived as man and wife in various parts of the country. At this stage his plan did not go beyond swindling her and leaving her. But when he discovered that she had no intention of allowing herself to be swindled, he decided to destroy her. The scene of the crime, Coldhams Farm, Quendon, near Clavering, Essex, was renamed the Moat Farm by Dougal himself. They took possession on April 27, 1899, and their life together there lasted for three weeks. Exactly four years later, on April 27, 1903, the body of Miss Holland was recovered from the ditch by the police. It was recovered, and the crime discovered, because of Dougal's reckless behaviour in the matter of servant girls. The confession is an extraordinary cautionary tale, but one could wish that the criminal had done the job thoroughly and related how intemperate love of women had brought him down. There were indeed goings on at the farm after his wife ran off with a labourer. Certain of Miss Holland's effects passed into the possession of various nursing mothers in the neighbourhood, affiliation orders mounted, gossip grew. The police began to wonder, and Dougal was

charged with forging a cheque in Miss Holland's name, though he nearly showed a clean pair of heels to the detective who challenged him at the Bank of England. Digging for the body of the victim went on for more than five weeks. It was found at last, and Dougal was charged with murder. Awaiting trial, he worried about the assassination of the Queen of Serbia. 'What,' he wrote, 'a dreadful piece of business!'



THE LITTLE FARM H.E.Bates



T WAS LONELY up at the farm after his mother died. It was a little farm and he was the only son. A track leading to the place went over bare, flat fields between dry stone walls that

in summer were yellow with stone-crop and lichen, and at the end stood the square grey house. He had lived there all his life, about thirty-five years, but he could not remember anyone ever painting it. Not that it mattered. Nobody ever came up there. A big walnut tree stood in the farmyard, by a stone barn, and a few damson trees along the banks of a pond. In the autumn most of the walnuts and damsons were blown off by wind and fell into the water and the long uncut grass and the tall coffee-brown docks. It was seven or eight miles into market and by the time you got the damsons gathered or the walnuts splashed and loaded them up into the back of the Morris, and by the time you counted petrol and time and the auctioneer's fee and everything else, it was hardly worth the trouble. And then he couldn't read or write very well. He could read print a little, but not written words. He had to take figures, like many other things, on trust. All this was because he had never been to school very much. mostly because in winter the weather was too bad or

because in summer there were crops to be hoed and harvested and his father needed him more. Then his father had died when he was seventeen and after that it was a struggle to pay the rent, buy seed, and save enough to buy the ten-year-old car. All his time had been occupied with that. He was a big man now, with square heavy shoulders and mild trustful grey eyes and a way of biting his lips when he was thinking. His name was Tom Richards and whenever he had cause to write it he would still pause a moment before putting it down.

'You want to put it in the advertisement?' the girl

said.

'Put what?'

'Put your name in. Or do you want a box number?'

'Box number?'

'It's instead of your name.'

'Ah?' He stood biting his lips, puzzled, watching her.

'If there are any replies, you see,' she said, 'they come here. Then you can pick them up and nobody need know who you are. I think if I were you I'd have a box number.'

'All right, then, all right.'

Mechanically she began to add up the words of the advertisement with her pencil point, and then paused. 'Would you like to read it over again?'

'Sure I don't know, I don't know.' He put his large hands on the counter of the office, feeling them warm with sweat. 'No,' he said, 'you read it. You. You writ it, didn't you?'

'All right.' The girl began to read what she had written for him because she thought he had been too embarrassed to write it himself. '"Lonely young farmer seeks young lady as companion-housekeeper. 35. Own

car. Strictest confidence." You think that's all right?' she said.

'I want somebody as'll work,' he said.

'Yes, I know,' she said. 'I know that. But I hardly know if I'd put that in.'

'No? All right, all right,' he said. 'If you think it'll do. How much'll it be?'

She added up the words again, and then looked up. 'Two and six. That's just the one week.'

'When'll I come in?'

'Try Saturday,' she said.

He went out of the newspaper office with relief and stood on the pavement outside, biting his lips. It was early summer. The sun struck hot on the pavements. Soon he would be needing someone for hay-time and harvest. He wanted a good, strong person, a good-looking person, but a hard-working person. That was his trouble. And as he stood there wondering what a hard-working person would look like and how he could tell he remembered something.

He went back into the office. 'I just thought of something,' he said. 'A photograph. We never said that.'

'No,' the girl said. 'We could put that.'

'You think it's a good idea? It's all right?'

'Yes,' the girl said. 'We'll put "photograph appreciated.' You'll get it in for the same money.'

He had a three-acre piece of mangels on the south side of the house where the wind was broken by a tenfoot blackberry hedge. The blackberries were in flower, mauve and pink and white, and in the hot shelter of the hedge the mangels were growing fast. He began to hoe them that week and as he moved up and down the rows, and still more as he stopped to give the hoe a touch with the file and stood looking back on the weeds that were



already dying grey in the sun, he would think about the advertisement and what might come out of it. He thought of having someone who would do the housework and the cooking in the mornings and then come out into the fields round about milking time or the early evening and help him. He thought of a woman who could hoe as well as a man or turn the hay-rows or help shock the wheat. His trouble, and his mother's trouble, had always been how to get help up there and how to afford it. For some time now he had had a man named Jack Emmett coming up in the afternoons. Emmett had

a milk-round down in Milton, the nearest town, and after he had finished the milk-round he drove out to the farm in a three-wheeler van and helped Tom Richards for four or five hours till dark. It didn't really cost Tom anything in the way of ready money because Emmett bought the day's milk supply of Tom's four black Ayrshires and collected up a few eggs and then deducted the money for his own time, twenty-five shillings a week generally, out of the money he owed Tom for the milk and eggs. The trouble was to get Emmett to pay the rest. The Ayrshires didn't give a great lot, but it varied and it mounted up, and there were always eggs, though Tom never knew how many. Emmett was always slow paying up, but what with people not paying him and the damn government putting restrictions on you for this and that, he would say, it was as much as he could do to keep going at all. When he finally paid up after four or five months Tom was so glad to see the money for cake or seed that he was beyond arguing whether it were right or wrong. He took Emmett's figures, like Emmett's time and Emmett's talk, on trust.

Once or twice that week, as he and Emmett hoed the mangels in the early evenings after milking was done, he thought of telling Emmett about the advertisement. But he decided finally against it. There were days when he felt that Emmett mesmerised him. Every day he talked, with a thick, rapid drip of words that were like warm candle-grease, about horse-racing. His pockets were always full of newspaper cuttings about form and prices and runners and tips and sometimes he would stand for five or even ten minutes at the end of the field and go over the Grand National for 1932 or the Cesarewitch for 1935 or some other race, waving his thin hands about excitedly. He was a man of twenty-seven with small

dark eyes like shoe-buttons, and black, thinning hair, and skin that never tanned and whose face as, if from long talking and dreaming about horses, had become long and bony, with fleshy lips that dribbled in moments of excitement. 'Whyn't you do a little bettin', Tom?' he'd say. 'Whyn't you bet? Too slow be half, Tom, that's what y'are. Too slow. You know how I work it? I tell you. Play 'em every day, Tom, see, play 'em every day. Select 'em and play 'em, see? Then whatever you win you put twenty per cent back in a pool, see? Whatever you win. Win a guid and you put four bob in the pool, see, see what I mean, Tom, see? You put it in and you never touch it, never touch it. It jis mounts up, twenty per cent, twenty per cent, twenty per cent all the time. So whatever you do, Tom, you win both ways, see, you win both ways, see, Tom, see what I mean, you allus win both ways.'

As Emmett talked it sounded important, business-like, smart, because of it he did not tell Emmett about the advertisement. He felt that Emmett might take the idea and somehow turn it into a smart business-like proposition. He didn't want that. He was going to give a home to someone who would cook his food and make his bed and help in the fields, and perhaps, in time, get fond of him. That was simple enough. He didn't want to be mesmerised by Emmett into any idea about winning both ways.

He was nervous and warm as he drove down into the town on Saturday afternoon. Now, if there were replies, he felt that he would not know quite what to do.

In the front office of the newspaper the girl smiled and leaned back and stretched one hand back to the box-number pigeon holes.

'Two,' she said. 'There may be more yet.'

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He stood with the envelopes in his hands, not speaking and not really looking at them.

'I hope they're nice,' the girl said. 'What you

want.'

'Yeh.'

He still stood there, looking at her as if he had something on his mind.

'Eh,' he said. 'Eh---'

'Yes?'

'You open 'em,' he said. 'You read 'em for me.'

'Oh! no,' she said. 'I wouldn't want to.'

'Yeh,' he said. 'Go on.' He gave the envelopes back to her. 'You see, I ain't all that much of a reader.'

He looked at her and waited. He liked her small, blonde, kind face. She had neat and friendly hands. He gazed at them steadily as she opened the first envelope.

'This one's from a girl at Thorpe.'

'Yeh?'

'She says she's twenty-nine. She's been a general maid and she can cook and make butter and she's always wanted to be on a farm and she likes the country. She says "I'm lonely, too, and I'll do anything I can if you think I'll do to make things go properly. I don't say I'm all that strong but I'm willing and that's everything so please write if favourable. Yours respectfully." Her name's Annie Moore,' the girl said.

'Yeh, yeh.' He thought of something. 'Ain't they a photograph?'

'No. No photograph.'

'What would you say?'

'Well,' the girl said, 'twenty-nine sounds fishy. They're always twenty-nine if they're over thirty and they're always thirty-nine if they're over forty.'

'Says she ain't over strong, too?'
'Yes.'

'Don't sound much good.'

'Shall we look at the other?' she said. She began to open the envelope, and he could see that there was a photograph this time. The girl stood looking at it for a moment and then she held it slowly out to him. He too stood looking at it and he knew as soon as he looked at it that she was a fine girl. Her face was rather broad and perhaps a little heavy about the eyes and lips, and her fair hair was brushed sideways and smooth across her forehead.

'She writes a sensible letter,' the girl said, but he was still looking at the photograph and he hardly listened as she went on. 'She's twenty-six and she says honestly she's never been near a farm, but she's always worked hard and she can learn. She says she's living with friends and if you think it's any good she'll be free Sunday evening and you can call to see her at this address, 12 Denmark Street, and you can take her out to the farm. She says any time between six and seven. Her name's Edna. Edna Johnson.'

He had heard only vaguely what had been said and now he looked up. He felt that the photograph was living and that, in a sense, the decision had been made.

'She sounds better,' the girl said.

'Yeh. Lot better.'

'Sounds honest, that's something.'

He was looking at the photograph again, at the broad, strong face and the smooth, strong hair. In a heavy kind of way it was a beautiful sort of face, but it was not so much about that that he cared. It was the word honest that now rose above the rest of his impressions and took control of his mind. Honesty and strength—that was

what he wanted. Somebody who would help and take a fair share of work and trouble, the good with the bad. Somebody he could trust.

IN THE EVENING SUN the shadow of the walnut tree lay on the dull stone house, darkening the grey frames of the windows that had never been painted for years. It lay across the surface of the pond crusted by duckweed. It was heavy on the rusted barrows lying deep in nettles by the barn and on the empty tarred pig-sties made long ago of barrel slats and on junk littered and forgotten under the broken roofs of faggot hovels. It seemed to subdue everything except one thing: Edna Johnson's light yellow hair.

You heard people say that a photograph could be faked to tell you anything, to make people look different from what they really were, but as he walked round the farm and across the fields where the blackberry flowers smothered all the hedges now and the wheat was rising heavy and dark in the sultry weather, Tom Richards would think again and again of how little faked this girl's photograph was. Her face was strong and heavy and her arms were bare up to the shoulders. Her mouth, as in the photograph, was rather big, but when she smiled her teeth were clean and hard against the broad, soft lips. And above all, as in the photograph, there was the impression of honesty. He felt it now in the way she looked at him and above all in the way she talked.

'So you've got no pigs now?' she said.

'No, I give 'em up.'

'No sheep either?'

'No, this ain't extra good sheep land.'

'Just the hens and cows and the two horses?'
'Yeh. That's all'

'Well, I don't know much about farming,' she said, 'but where's your money come from?'

'Milk mostly. Milk and wheat. Git some good crops o' wheat.'

'I've always lived in towns,' she said. 'You know that, don't you?'

'Yeh.' She had an easy, straightforward way of talking, and sometimes he did not know what to say in answer. 'You wan' see the house?' he said at last, and she said yes, she would.

He knew there was nothing much he could say about the house and he hardly spoke as he showed her the smoke-darkened kitchen, with the dirty Valor oil-stove in one corner, where he did his own cooking and washing and most of his eating; the parlour, with the glaze-tiled grate and the wall-paper so old and sun-faded that the pattern was now as faint as a water-mark; the three bedrooms with the big, high brass bedsteads, the white toilet services set out nakedly on marble wash-stands, the family photographs on the walls, the old-fashioned tasselled valences on the beds, and the long ivorycoloured curtains of lace at the paintless windows. In one of the bedrooms he saw her pause and look out of the window, across the fields that stretched for a mile or two without another house. The room smelled old and airless after the heat of the day. Suddenly she went to the window and tried to open it, but years before, perhaps when it had last been painted, the woodwork had stuck and he could not remember it ever having been opened. After struggling for a moment she seemed to realise the hopelessness of it too and gave it up and stood away and said: 'Let's go downstairs.'

They went downstairs and he thought it was best that they should sit in the parlour. It was never used, but it seemed right. That too smelled airless and dead, the air stale with sun-warmed dust. On the mantelpiece stood a pair of pink glass vases filled with stalks of brown silverweed that many years before had been gathered by his mother from the pond. If you touched them they crumbled into fine brown dust. Behind the vases hung a mirror that twisted the reflection of the faces that looked into it, and immediately in front of it stood a white marble clock that did not go. It had always seemed to him anice clean little parlour and at Christmas time, when he brought in logs for the fire, it was warm and pleasant. But now he was not happy. He began to realise at last that the honesty of the girl, if it were really the kind of honesty he hoped and thought it was, must make her at last get up and go out of the dead, airless, dusty little parlour and not come back again.

From the moment when, down in the town, he had seen her come out of the house, hatless, her fair hair brushed smooth and her three-quarter-length navy coat unbuttoned so that her cream frock showed tight over her rather big body, he had been nervous. Now, as he sat on the chair near the window and watched the evening light streaming across the room, making her blonde skin if anything fairer than ever and her light hair a shade lighter in tone, he felt sick because of the sense of growing failure. Perhaps he should have told Emmett. Together they might have cleaned the place up a bit. He thought suddenly of his mother, old, slipshod, rooted in old careless ways, and he felt that the place belonged to and smelled of the dead.

'Well, I don't know what you think,' he said. 'I know it ain't over-smart. But I'm so short-handed.'

She did not speak.

'It ain't a very big farm,' he said. 'Perhaps it ain't so big as you thought it'd be.'

She was not looking at him, but she seemed to be listening, as though perhaps she was impressed not so much by what he was saying as by the simple, anxious tone of his voice.

'Well,' she said at last, and then she stopped.

He knew then what she was going to say, and before she could speak again he began to talk quite quickly. He said, 'I got a little money. I don't want you to think I ain't. Mum left sixty-odd pund and there's some of it still in sovereigns and some more in old War Savings Certificates. Then I got thirty or forty in the bank. I ain't touched that for a good while. Then Emmett owes me seventy-odd. I don't want you to think I ain't got nothing, see? I can pay. I'll pay twenty-five shillings.'

'Who's Emmett?'

'He takes my milk.'

'He owes all that? Seventy-odd for milk?'

'Yeh. Allus owes like that.'

'Always?' she said. 'You let him?'

'Yeh,' he said. 'You see, I ain't very much good at figures.'

She did not speak, but sat with her face resting on one hand, looking at the pattern of the cheap grey lino on the floor. The skin of her hands and face and neck was creamy and warm and she had fine golden hairs on the backs of her rather broad hands. He knew now that whether she came or not something must happen. He felt tightened up inside himself, tense and yet unsteady because he liked her.

'You see, I can't do it all myself,' he said. 'Cooking

and washing up and cleaning. I can't do it. That's why the place looks so bad. It wants a thorough doin'. It ain't had one since Mum died.'

'Got any sisters?' she said.

'No.'

'Any aunts or anybody?'

'No. Well, I got an aunt and a cousin over at Stanstead. But they never come near.'

'Nobody at all?'

'Nobody,' he said.

She seemed to think it over a little longer, still with her face in her hands and her eyes on the floor. 'Things'd have to be changed,' she said at last, 'if I came.'

'I know,' he said. 'I know they'd have to be changed. Changed a lot. I know.'

'All right.' She got up at last and ran her hands down the front of her body, smoothing her dress. 'All right,' she said. 'As long as you know.'

That was all she said and it still seemed unreal to him when she arrived next day, carrying a suit-case. She came by bus as far as the turnpike and he picked her up there in the car and drove her across the field-track between the stone walls that were golden-crested now with stonecrop in flower. She asked him at the house what time he reckoned for dinner, and he said: 'Any time. I gen'lly have it standing up. In my hands,' and she said: 'You get on with whatever it is you're doing and I'll call you when it's ready.'

He still had fifteen rows to hoe in the mangel field and he spent the rest of the morning there. About noon, on normal days, he went back to the house and cut himself a lump of bread and cheese and boiled a kettle on the Valor for tea. Sometimes he spread Worcester Sauce on the bread. The paper didn't come till Emmett brought it in the afternoons. All he could do when it came was look at the pictures and while eating there was nothing for him to do but stare into space, absently breaking bits of bread for the two black cats that rubbed against his rubber boots.

To-day when he went into the kitchen, not waiting for her to call, he saw that something had happened. The girl was not there. The Valor had been cleaned and polished and was standing in a different place, near the window. Two chairs had been brought in from the parlour and in the centre of the kitchen stood the parlour table, a round, walnut pedestal, laid with a white cloth. He was still staring at it when she came into the room.

'The worm's in the leg,' she said. 'Bad. I thought we'd better use it.'

'Yeh, but how'd you move it?'

'The top comes off. Is bacon and eggs all right for your dinner? It's all I could find.'

'Yeh, yeh.'

'When does the butcher call? And we're almost out of bread.'

'They don't neither of 'em come. They won't bring the vans across the fields.'

'You mean nobody comes? Butcher, baker, grocer—nobody?'

'Emmett brings everything,' he said. 'Paper, bread, grocery, meat when I want it. Stuff from the station.'

'Emmett must be wonderful,' she said.

They sat at the table and ate the bacon and eggs she had cooked. It was good and rich and fatty, so that he could dip his bread in the plate. She was wearing a blue pinafore without sleeves and the upper part of her bare arms was strong and white. They did not talk

much. She said she was sorry there was no pudding, but to-morrow she would make him one. To-day it was clearing up the place that worried her. What pudding did he like?

'Well,' he said, 'it's bin a middlin' long wild since I tasted a bake pudden.'

'All right,' she said. 'As long as you don't go saying it's not like your mother used to make.'

'Mum?' he said. 'She couldn' cook. Onion clangers, that's what we used to live on.'

'Will you come back for your tea?' she said.

'I don't know as I care,' he said, 'either one way or th' other.'

'Well, I do,' she said. 'I got work here.' She stretched her arms back over her head, as if a little tired. 'But I'll get your tea if you want it. And when you want it. You're the boss.'

'All right,' he said. 'All right. About five.'

He went back to the mangel field and pushed his hat back on his head as he hoed. All afternoon the sweat stood clear on his forehead, but he hoed without really thinking or feeling the heat. He was thinking of the pedestal table: which she had moved by herself, without asking him, which meant that she was not only strong but independent. He kept thinking too of her bare, white arms spread on the tablecloth and the way she leaned back and stretched her arms over her head and said there was work to do, pulling her dress like smooth skin over her tightened breasts. She was a strong, good-looking girl all right, and in time, when the place was straight inside, she would come out and help him in the fields.

As he walked back to the farm, about five in the afternoon, the heat was moist and windless and the hens

Were lying silent in dust pools under the walnut tree. He noticed that the windows of the house were wide open. Emmett's milk van stood in the shade of the barn and he could hear now and then the clank of a milk bucket inside the barn. He stood still a minute. The sun stabbed down on the crown of his head and he was wondering if he should go first into the barn or into the house when suddenly he thought that he heard voices. He listened for a minute. Yes, they were voices all right, and he knew after a moment that they were coming from the barn.

When he went inside the barn it seemed blindingly dark for a moment after the hard, bright sun. But after a second or two he saw that Emmett had finished milking. The bubbles were still fresh and blue on the rim of milk in the buckets, and there was a white splash or two among the dark green dung on the floor.

He stood still for a moment, not seeing anyone and not hearing the voices. Then the voices began again. They came now from the far door of the barn and he walked across towards it.

'Hullo,' Emmett said. 'I'm talking to Edna. You never told me you were getting help.'

'No.'

He was looking at the girl. She was standing in the bright sunlight of the doorway with bare arms folded, smiling.

'She's just been asking me how long since the place seen a coat o' paint,' Emmett said. 'I tell her I can't remember no farther back than the Boer War.'

Emmett laughed and the girl laughed too. It was a strong, clear laugh, and it seemed to sweep clearly through the thick air of the small farmyard.

'We bin saying,' Emmett said, 'it'd pay you to spend

a pound or two havin' th' outside painted afore another winter.'

'The rain's been coming in my bedroom,' the girl said. 'It must have been coming in for months. It's only because the place has never been turned out it's never been noticed. I moved a chest of drawers this afternoon and there it was. Paper peeling off the walls, floorboards rotten. It's in a terrible state. It'll only get worse.'

'Yeh,' Tom said. 'Yeh.'

'People are silly about property,' the girl said. 'They think it takes care of itself. And then one day the house falls down.'

'That's right,' Emmett said. 'Ten or twenty quid spent on this place 'd be as good as puttin' money in the bank.'

'Well,' the girl said, 'tea's ready. You'd better come in.'

She unfolded her arms and walked out of the barn, careless and cool and easy, as if she had been doing the same thing every afternoon of her life. Tom followed her, and as they crossed the yard Emmett called out: 'If there's anything you want bringing up from Milton, only be too glad,' and the girl half-turned to call back: 'I've got a list written out. That's what I came to ask you. I'd be glad of them to-morrow.'

As they sat down to tea in the kitchen Tom noticed that the bricks of the floor shone red. For years they had been the colour of earth, and sacks had been laid down to take the dirt of incoming feet. Now the bricks were washed and the sacks gone, and he could smell the cleanliness of the place and could feel the air moving in at the open window.

'Here's a list of the things I want,' the girl said. 'Do

you want to see them?' She held out the list, written on a torn envelope.

'No,' he said. 'It's all right. You want 'em, I dare-say, it's all right.'

'It'll come to money, that's all,' the girl said.

'I'll git it afore Emmett goes,' he said.

'No, I wouldn't,' she said. 'I wouldn't. Emmett can pay and get receipts and I'll settle with him. Oh! and who's your grocer?'

'Mum allus went Co-Op,' he said. 'But they give up calling.'

'You know their number?'

'I dunno now.'

'Never mind. We'll find out. And where's your oil? I'm down to a pint. Don't you buy it in quantity?'

'No. I do git run out every once in a while.'

'Well, why don't you buy it in quantity? A hundred gallons a time or something? I know it's cheaper like that.'

'A hundred gallons?' he said.

'Well, why not? You could buy your flour that way, too. Up here where nobody calls much you want your stuff in quantity.'

'I never thought o' that,' he said. He thought a moment. 'Yeh, I remember once when I was a kid it snowed for three or four days and nobody come near. We run out o' flour and never had no bread.'

'There you are,' she said.

She took his empty cup and poured more tea. It was good and strong and sweet. There were good slices of bread and raspberry jam. He liked things sweet and it was as if she knew.

'Another thing,' she said. 'About that bedroom. I

can sleep there for a bit, but something'll have to be done. It'll cost money, but it'll be worth it.'

'I daresay I could do it myself,' he said.

'I daresay you could,' she said, 'but I daresay you're not going to. There's a month's work in this place if there's a minute.'

'Yeh, that's right.'

'Burning the paint off. Window sashes mended. New paper.'

'Yeh.'

'If I were you I'd see to it right away. Unless you want me to.'

'You,' he said. 'You.'

THAT NIGHT he lay in bed and heard the cuckoo still calling in the June dusk across the woods, deepening the warm silence, but now also there were new sounds. It was strange to feel the presence of another person in the house, to hear the movements of the girl as she walked across the old loose floorboards of the room next to his own. He lay listening to these sounds and thinking of her bare, strong arms, her laugh, the calm confidence of her voice and the way she moved. He thought again of the pedestal table and the clean red floor and the oil and the way she wanted the house done. He saw how natural and sensible all these changes were, and he wondered why he had never noticed them. He wondered too why a girl of that calm and sensible disposition had decided to come out to a house that she knew was old and ill-kept and had never been painted for years, where the baker and the butcher had ceased calling and where even in summer you never saw a new face to

break the loneliness, and the silverweed and chicory grew so thick on the track across the fields that by high summer the wheel-marks were overgrown. He was not troubled but on the contrary glad that she had come; he was only set wondering because she looked like a girl who could have got some other kind of a job, a good, decent town job, with gas to cook by and handy shops and pavements and people. It did not occur to him that perhaps she had come for some such reason as that, because she was tired of people or because she wanted loneliness or because loneliness and work and new surroundings would cover up and perhaps in time obliterate something she did not want to remember.

He could not get used to the idea of her sleeping there in the house, so close to him and he lay awake for a long time. Finally he went off into a heavy sleep and when he woke the cuckoo was calling again and he could hear sounds of the girl moving once more, but now to his surprise she was already moving downstairs.

It was then about six o'clock. He got up, went down the dark carpetless stairs, carrying his jacket and his boots in his hands. The girl was in the kitchen, wearing a white pinafore, her hair brushed. She said 'Good morning,' and 'Your shaving water's hot. In the sink.'

'I reckon to shave o' nights,' he said.

'Oh, well!' she said, 'use it for washing. How many eggs do you like? I'm boiling them.'

'Two,' he said. 'Two'll do.'

'I like mine soft,' she said. 'What about you?'

'It don't matter. I like 'em either way.'

'They're better for you soft,' she said.

He ran his hands over the bristles of his face. They were very thick and tough and he felt frowsy. He was embarrassed and, deciding to shave, wondered if she

noticed it. After the shave he felt better and he knew that she did notice it. He was bewildered because of it, because she looked at him and because of the eggs, the hot water, and the thought of being waited on.

'Where are you going to be to-day?' she said.

'I got a job on the hay mower,' he said. 'Just in the shed.'

'That's all right—so long as I know where you are. I might want a hand moving a few things.'

He recalled as he worked on the mower how it was the honesty of the girl that had first impressed him. Now it bewildered him. He remained bewildered all morning, slightly on edge, waiting for her to call him. She did not call and when at last he went in to dinner he discovered that she had turned the furniture of his bedroom completely round and had carried the mattress downstairs to air in the sun. 'I didn't want to bother you,' she said.

Emmett came early that afternoon. It was only a little after two o'clock when he drove the three-wheeler into the yard and parked it under the walnut tree. The girl, hearing the brakes, came out of the house, drying her arms on her pinafore, calling: 'You brought my things, Mr. Emmett?'

'There they are,' Emmett said. 'Pretty nigh a load on 'em.'

'Did you get everything? Got the receipts?'

'Everything except the carpet soap. I'll git that to-morrow. Yeh, I got the receipts. Make a hole in four pound.'

'All right,' she said. 'I'll check them off as I take them in.'

'I'd better take the flour in for you,' Emmett said. 'There's half a hunderd.'

Emmett unloaded the sack of flour and carried it on his back into the house. The girl took packages, bars of soap, candles, jam, vinegar, bread, meat, making two or three journeys. She paused at last to ask Emmett about oil and Emmett said: 'Th' oil's comin' up separate. Fifty gallon on it. Be up sarfnoon.'

'That's all, then. Thanks,' she said.

'You hadn't ought to starve for a bit,' Emmett said.
'Make a hole in four pound.'

'Yes.'

'I settled up,' Emmett said, waiting.

'Yes, I know,' she said. 'Knock it off what you owe for milk.'

Emmett looked at her, dumbly. She walked away, but he did not move or speak. She disappeared into the house and even then Emmett did not move for some moments. And when at last from under the shed Tom Richards watched him go slowly past towards the cowbarn, Emmett not noticing him, his small eyes downcast and troubled, he could not believe what he had seen; he could not understand that in a moment the old slipshod arrangement of months had been broken down.

That day Emmett forgot to talk about horse-racing. He forgot to talk much at all, and something new was begun. From that day he began to go back into the town almost every evening with a list of things the girl needed, and on the following afternoon he came out to the farm with the goods and the receipts. In the past he had brought the newspaper; now he brought bread and meat and the weekly groceries and almost anything the girl needed for the house. Every day, as she took the things into the kitchen, he stood looking after her, dumbly, as if it were his turn now to be mesmerised. And sometimes he would go away as if talking to himself,

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in moods of angry resistance and perhaps of latent revenge at being used by her like that. She had been nice and familiar to him that first day; he had called her Edna and had got round her in a jiffy. Now look what he was in for. Fetch and carry, do this, do that for her. And then the money. That was a tall order if you like. As if he wasn't going to pay, as if he never did pay. He would speak to Tom about it. What right had she ordering and dictating about the money?

And so as she moved about the farm, systematically collecting the eggs that had once been collected in a slipshod way only by Emmett, gathering red and white currants from the old neglected bushes overgrown with nettles and white bind-weed behind the barn, hoeing the lettuces and carrots she had herself sown in rows where the weeds had been cleared, the two men would watch her in different ways, neither understanding her or why she was there. Emmett saw her with a kind of suppressed resentment out of the corners of his eyes, Tom Richards with cautious bewilderment, clear grey eves held fascinated by her energy and honesty, by the way her body moved and by the colour of her hair shining like pressed straw in the hot, bright sun. By the end of June the house-painters were working in the house, and from the hay-field, where he worked alone in the mornings turning the rows by hand, he could hear the hum of blow-lamps burning off the paint that had become scaled rough and grey with years of neglect and exposure. He could hear the voices of the two painters talking to each other on the ladders in the still late June air, and one morning at last he looked up to see the house as it were staring back at him, stark-eyed with new white paint, from between the barn and the walnut tree.

For some days he could not get used to the clean

white windows. He would get used to them in time, perhaps, he thought, just as he would get used to the new cream paint on the doors of the bedrooms, the new flowered wall-paper, the red kitchen floor, the bedsteads that had been moved, and to the presence and appearance of the girl herself in the once faded and dirty house where he had grown used to being alone. He would grow used to her: but now, whenever he looked at her. or whenever he looked up from hoeing or turning the hay-rows, and saw her coming across the fields with the blue enamel can of tea and the basket of food for Emmett and himself in the afternoons, he experienced the same shock of surprise, the unfading and slightly sickening surprise that she was there at all. Sometimes on very hot afternoons she would change out of her working dress into a thinner frock and it struck him once or twice that she had put on weight since she had come to live at the farm. Her bare arms were brown with sun and her forehead was tanned a paler brown-gold under her bleached hair. In the thinner dress he could see clearly the shape and movements of her breasts as she walked and the brown angle of her upper breast where the sun had burned the smooth blonde skin

He did not ask her to work in the fields. She came sometimes of her own accord into the hay-fields and turned a row or two with a rake, and then all at once she would say perhaps, 'Well, this won't do, I must be getting back. I've got some cheese-cakes and a pie in the oven' and as she dropped her rake and went back to the house between the green-golden rows and cocks of hay he would not even remember that he had once wanted above all a woman who would work in the fields with him. It did not now seem to matter. What mattered, and what he could not yet understand, was

that he had this woman, a woman who had cleaned the house from top to bottom as if it had been her own, had taken down the old rotting curtains from the wormeaten mahogany poles, had revolutionised the food and the furniture, had worked from six in the morning to past darkness without ever seeming to want anything except food and sleep in return, a woman who above all could see the value of money and properly kept accounts and a daily check on the eggs and the milk and not least a check on Emmett.

And sometimes, without attaching much importance to it, he would see Emmett watching her go back across the hay-field with a strange look. His small eyes would move up and down, from her shoes to her hair, partly as if he hated her and could not understand her, partly as if he were attracted.

One afternoon Tom was loading hay alone, and Emmett did not seem to come out into the field. Even in the shade of the oaks the heat was heavy and flies settled like clusters of berries on the eyes of the horse, which fretted and would not stand. Tom cut a bough or two of ash to stick in the bridle, but the horse remained fretful and at last he took a light load back to the farm, partly in order to see where Emmett was.

As he led the horse into the yard and halted it under the walnut tree he could hear voices. They were again the voices of Edna and Emmett, but it was mainly Emmett who was talking. Moving towards the barn, in the direction of the voices, Tom heard Emmett raising his voice in anger.

'Think of you? I'll bloody soon tell you what I think of you.'

'You will.'

'Pushin' your nose in here. Interferin'. Me and

Tom got on together all right afore you come nosin' in!'

'You mean you got on all right,' Edna said. 'Owing nearly a hundred pounds for milk and God knows what else for the eggs you never counted. Never a single proper account between the two of you but you always on the right side.'

'That's his look-out.'

'Yes, and what a look-out. Because he can't read or write. Because he's honest and trusts folks and expects them to trust him. Because he works hard and tries to be decent. But that's no reason why you should try to take the skin off his back. Don't you ever think about anything else but what you can get out of folks?'

'If I do it's my business,' Emmett said. 'What's it got to do wi' you? You ain't married to him. You ain't no relation. You ain't nobody. In fact it's a damn funny thing you come out here at all. Damn funny. I ain't bottomed it yet.'

'Who asked you to bottom it?' Edna said. 'All you want to learn to do is pay up and act decent and mind your own business.'

'Is it? Well, I ain't so sure! I ain't so sure! I think it's damn funny thing you come out here. And I'll git to know the reason. I'll——'

'You better shut up now,' Edna said, 'before you get to know something you won't forget in a hurry.'

'Who from?' Who from?' Emmett said. He suddenly came out of the barn backwards, shouting: 'Who from? I tell you I'll git to know! I'll git to know! You ain't here for nothing, that's a sure bloody thing. I'll git to know!'

TREES OF early unnamed apples began to ripen in the first week of August in the garden at the back of the house, where no one had ever gathered them for years. 'We allus call 'em harvest pippins,' Tom said. 'Sour as hogs' wash.'

'Don't you never gather them?' the girl said.

'They allus come just at harvest and we never got time. Wheat's more consequence 'n apples.'

'Well, it may be. But all the same I can't stand by and see good apples rot on the tree.'

In the first ten days of August she gathered forty



bushels of apples. There was a warm odour of apples in the house whenever he came in out of the hot sun. At the end of the ten days she made him drive in to market. They loaded the twenty sacks of apples into the trailer and that afternoon, in the covered auction market, the apples made half a crown a bushel. 'Five pounds,' she said. 'Was it worth it?'

'Well,' he said. 'Well.'

'I'll do the same with the damsons and the walnuts and that tree of stewing pears.'

'If anybody'd give me five pound I wouldn't ha' believed it.'

'Well, now you've got five pounds.'

'No,' he said. 'No. That I ain't. That's your own. You earned that.'

'You put it under the mattress,' she said. 'You'll need it soon enough.'

'No,' he said. 'No. It's yourn. You have it.'

'Put it under the mattress, I said.'

'You got to have some of it,' he said. 'Buy yourself something—buy yourself a present.'

'No really,' she said.

'I want you to,' he said. 'I want to give you that.'

She smiled. 'All right. If it's not too much there is something I want. If it's not too much, I want a new dress.'

'It ain't too much,' he said. 'You go and get it while I have a look round.'

'No,' she said. 'If you're paying for it you're coming with me.'

He sat for nearly an hour on the upstairs floor of the dress-shop, watching her come out of the dressing cubicles wearing first one new dress and then another. He sat with his large hands on his knees, embarrassed

because of the shop-girl, not knowing whether he liked the dresses because, for a long time, one seemed very like another. At last she came out of the cubicle wearing a light blue silk that was smooth on her hips and breast. Her brown-gold arms and her face were lit up by the clean blue colour and he knew suddenly it was the one he wanted her to have.

'I'll just go and change it,' she said, 'and then choose a pair of stockings and we can go home.'

'Keep it on,' he said. 'Keep it on. I like to see it.' 'All right,' she said. 'Just till we get home.'

It was early evening when they drove back to the farm. Emmett was loading the milk-churns into the three-wheeler and the girl, seeing him, walked straight into the house, not speaking. Tom drove the car under the shed beyond the barn and then stopped to speak for a few moments with Emmett, who was sitting at the driving wheel of the car. He told him how the apples had sold for five pounds and after a few minutes Emmett drove away.

After Emmett had gone, Tom went into the house. The kitchen was empty. He called the girl, saying, 'Are you there?' He had never used her name. She did not answer and he went to the foot of the stairs and called again. There was no reply and after a moment he went upstairs.

The door of her bedroom was open a little. He pushed it fully open with one hand and went in. As he saw her he stopped. She had taken off the new dress and was standing by the bed, in the evening sunlight, in her skirt. She smiled without speaking and he could see the brown edge of sunburn on her neck and shoulders and the deep hollow of her breasts that were cream above the edge of her pink skirt and below

the brown rim of sun. He felt very tender towards her and she seemed to him very beautiful. He said something about wanting to see her in the new dress. She smiled again and let him put his hands on her bare warm shoulders. 'I've put it away,' she said. 'You'll just have to see me as I am.'

He stood for a moment looking down at her, sick and trembling. Her body was alight with the evening sun, and was very warm, as if with reflected sun.

'I like you,' he said at last. 'God, I like you.'

'I like you,' she said. 'I always have. I shouldn't have come unless I did.'

'You're goin' to stop here?' he said. 'You ain't goin' now?'

'Going?' she said. 'What makes you think that? I'm not going.'

'I just wanted to know. I just wanted to be sure.'

She opened her arms and stretched them upward until they held him and he could feel the soft pressure of her firm strong breasts against himself and the steady tenderness of the palms of her warm hands on his face.

'It's just as sure now as anything ever is.'

FROM THAT moment he relied on her completely. He could not imagine the little farm, isolated, ill-managed, almost derelict, with its fruit that no one ever gathered and its grey windows that no one ever painted, as it had been before she came. He could not imagine how he had managed for food, why he had never bought oil and flour in quantity, why milk and eggs had never been checked, how above all he had managed to endure the loneliness of the shabby grey house where no one but

Emmett ever called. As he lay awake at night he heard sometimes the tender sound of walnut leaves brushed by light wind against the roof of the house above his window and the voice of a late corncrake calling from across the wheat field that was now growing whiter with ripeness every day. They were no longer sounds that emphasised the solitude of the place, but were like beats in pulse of his entire happiness. He heard too the nearer sounds with a different emotion, the house no longer a hollow shabby shell occupied by himself and a stranger. He was excited by their familiarity. He heard the creaks of the loose floor-boards as the girl undressed for the night and he thought of her sunburned body as it must be when she uncovered it in the candlelight or the summer darkness. He lay thinking of it until at last it was possible to lie there no longer without her. One night he waited until the sounds of her undressing had ceased, and when at last nothing but the wind lightly moving the walnut leaves broke the silence he got up and went into her room. It was not really dark and in the hot August twilight she was lying on the bed with nothing but a single white sheet over her outstretched body. As he moved towards her she curved her body out of its calm immobility and he saw her eyes shining very faintly and her bare arms stretch themselves above her head. She did not speak; but somehow he knew quite well that she had been waiting for him to come.

From that time they began to live as if they were married, living and sleeping together and even, now, sometimes going out together. On a market day, or perhaps on Saturday evenings, she put on the new blue dress and they drove down into the town. As harvest came on she came out into the wheat field and helped to bond or shock or carry the sheaves. From the top of

the load of wheat he would look down on her upturned face, browner now than the wheat itself, and see in it the impression of something that had never diminished since the day he had first seen her photograph: the impression of honesty going beyond anything he had ever known. Behind all the tenderness and love he felt in an increasing way a great sense of trust in her. He did not ask and now did not want to know why she had ever come out to the farm. It was enough that she was there, enough simply that he could take her as she was.

He was troubled only by one thing. He did not want Emmett there any longer. He was tired of the voice talking through the hot harvest afternoons about horses and horse-racing, tired of Emmett owing money, tired above all of that strange look, a sort of reflective hatred, with which Emmett watched her sometimes as she moved about the farm.

'I'm goin' get things straightened up and finished with Emmett,' he told her.

'I don't think I would,' she said. 'Not yet. He still owes fifty or sixty pounds milk money.'

'Yeh, and he'll keep on owing it.'

'No, he won't,' she said. 'I've got twenty pounds or more out of him now. I'll get the rest. In time.'

'But I don't want him here. Hanging about the place. Spying, talking horses. He can pay and get out. If he don't pay he can still get out and we'll let the money go.'

'You want that money,' she said. 'You know you do.'

'Not as bad as all that.'

'But bad enough. He promised twenty-five pounds by the twentieth of the month. I'd better see what I can do.' On the following afternoon she went alone to talk to Emmett in the barn. The cows were restless in the fly-clouded heat of the afternoon. The sunlight came in bright hot spears through cracks in the dark roof and lay on the straw and the milk-sprinkled dung of the floor.

'Money,' Emmett said. 'The way you talk anybody

might think I were made o' money.'

'You had the milk and you had the eggs,' she said.
'It's time you paid something and you're going to pay something.'

'I ain't in no hurry,' Emmett said.

'How do you think we run the place?' she said. 'How do you think we pay bills?' On fresh air?'

'We,' Emmett said, 'we?'

'Yes, we,' she said. 'What's wrong about that?'

'Nothing,' Emmett said. 'Nothing. Only some git money one way and some git it another.'

He was carrying a bucket of milk and now he set it down. His hands, dirty at the nail rims, were damp with milk as he put them on her shoulders. 'Come on,' he said. 'You know. Make out you don't know.'

'Shut up,' she said.

'Come on, Edna, come on,' he said.

'Will you shut up?' she said. 'Will you? For God's sake? Will you?'

'Ah, come on,' Emmett said.

'Will you take your hands off me before I smash your face in?' she said. 'Will you?' Will you?'

'Now, Edna---'

She hit him full in the face with one hand, and they stood for a moment facing each other without a word. Then Emmett spoke.

'Funny way for a married woman t'act,' he said. 'Cuss me if it ain't.'

'What did you say?' she said. 'What did you say?' 'Married,' Emmett said. 'That's what I said. You're married and you bin married a long time.'

'All you're fit for,' she said, 'is sneaking and spying and betting and listening to dirty gossip! That's all you're fit for! That's all!'

'Yeh, but it's true, ain't it?'

'Who said so? Who said it's true?'

'It's true, ain't it?'

'Who said so?' Who said so?'

'Everybody,' Emmett said. 'Everybody. Who the hell do you think? Everybody! Everybody knows it. Everybody except Tom.'

'You're a liar,' she said. 'You know you're a liar. Nobody knows it. Nobody knows it. Unless you told them. I don't come from this district. I don't come from within a hundred miles of here. Nobody knows it unless you told them. Nobody knows who I am or where I come from or what I've done.'

'That's jis' where you're wrong,' Emmett said. 'I know. I made it my business to find out. And if y'ain't careful I'll make it my business to see as somebody else finds out.'

'I'll murder you,' she said.

She was trembling now and the tears began to come into her eyes, driven by anger. For a minute she did not know what she was doing. Her face was very white and she began moving a fraction towards Emmett, so that he in turn moved backwards. As she moved, a shaft of sunlight came down sharply across her eyes that were now brimming with tears of rage, so that the wet pupils were for a moment broken up like furious particles of splintered metal.

'You tell him,' she said, 'and I'll murder you.'

Her eyes remained full of angry tears that did not fall, and Emmett, unable to look at them, did not speak.

'And I mean it,' she said. 'You tell him and I'll murder you. I'll murder you. If anyone tells him I'll tell him myself.'

BY LATE AUGUST the yard lay early in the evening under the shadow of the house, the outbuildings and the walnut tree. The sun lay on the empty wheat-field and on the patches of oat and barley stubble running by the dark strips of roots and potatoes. The damsons were getting ripe by the pond and in hot summers were beginning to fall, dark purple skin split golden by wasps, to be lost in the water or among the grass and the big coffee-brown docks that were never cut down. The huge shadow of the walnut tree was lit up by the new stacks of yellow corn and the heavy underleaves were tangled with straws brushed off by branches from the waggons passing below.

But this year it would be different. The girl would gather the damsons, and the walnuts would be splashed. By the barn there were trees of elderberries bowed with purple bunches of fruit and soon she would be making wine. Now that harvest was finished she could glean corn for the hens on the stubbles and she could gather blackberries in the hedges of the root-field where they were already warm and ripe in the sun. As the days grew colder she would gather wood and light a fire in the new-papered parlour, where no fire had ever before been lit except perhaps once a year, and they would sit by it, she reading the paper aloud to him, until it was time at last to go to bed. They would sleep in her room

because the bed was better and because there was an oil-lamp by which she could see to brush her hair. The movement of her body under her nightdress as she brushed her hair in the lamplight would be one of the things he had waited for all evening and the blonde smooth colour of her hair, exactly like straw, would be only one of the many things about her that made up his happiness.

Already this year he thought the stack of wheat seemed larger than he could remember. As they finished topping it up he looked down from the stack and said to Emmett, on the waggon below, how much he wanted Edna to see it. 'I reckon it's the biggest we ever had, Emmett,' he said.

'New stacks allus look bigger,' Emmett said. 'They ain't settled.'

'Yeh, but this year the straw's longer. Look at that.' He suddenly whipped a loose straw out of a sheaf and held it for Emmett to see. 'That's damn near a six-foot straw,' he said.

He came down off the stack with the straw still in his hands. He was twisting and plaiting it without thinking as he went into the house. 'Edna,' he called. 'Are y'about?' The kitchen was empty. He stood for a minute calling her. 'I want you to come an' see the new stack. Are y'about?'

There was no answer and he went into the front parlour. It was empty and he stood calling her name at the foot of the stairs. The house was clean and neat and cool, and he went upstairs on the extreme tips of boot-toes, thinking of the dirt and straw on his feet. He called her name once or twice upstairs, but the rooms were empty and after a few moments he came down.

He stood in the kitchen again, not calling now, but

simply thinking where she might be. He wanted her to see the stack; it seemed so large and good, to represent all the change and prosperity of the summer. A few straws had blown in and lay on the floor of the kitchen. He stooped to pick one up.

As he raised his eyes again he stopped. He saw that there was an envelope propped up by the Valor stove. Very slowly he took it up in his hands, turning it over. He slit it open at last with his fingers and took out the letter. It was written in pencil, rather faint and on rather thin paper. He did not move and did not really look at the writing.

It was only after a moment or two that he realised that he could not read it. Sometimes if it were not very hard he could read print; but not writing. For a long time he stood staring at the pencil marks. They meant nothing to him and yet they meant so much. He felt his heavy body go light and empty and his blood come thumping up his cold throat.

After a long time he remembered Emmett. Emmett could read. He went to the door with the letter in his hands and called Emmett to come across the yard. Emmett got off the waggon and came across the yard, shifty but not hurrying, spitting as he came.

'Emmett, I got a letter. I can't make it out.'

'Where's Edna?'

'That's what I mean,' Tom said. 'Edna ain't here.'

'Ain't here? Where's she gone?'

'That's it,' Tom said. 'That's what I mean. I don't know. You better read the letter.'

Emmett took the letter. He did not look up. His hands felt stiff. Tom went into the kitchen and sat down at the table, and Emmett followed him and sat down too. For a few moments Emmett sat looking at the letter,

turning over the sheet and reading the other side. His lower lip began to tremble as it always did in moments of excitement, and at last he spread the letter on the table, so that he could read it without raising his eyes.

'It ain't very easy,' he said.

'Easy? You can't read it you mean?'

'No,' Emmett said. 'No, it ain't that. I can read it.'

'What is it then?'

'She's gone,' Emmett said.

'Gone?' he said. 'Gone? Where's she gone?'

'It don't say,' Emmett said. 'She's just gone. Gone altogether. For good.'

'For good?' he said. 'What for? Why's she gone? What for? Don't she say?'

'Yes,' Emmett said, 'only it ain't easy.'

'Easy? It's easy enough, ain't it? All I want to know is what it says.'

'All right, all right,' Emmett said. 'I'll tell you what it says. I'll tell you.'

He smoothed the letter flat against the table with his hands. He held his palms hard and flat on the wood and he kept his eyes lowered, not once looking up. His voice had a dry quality, rather low, but where his hair thinned above the temples his skin was wet with sweat. 'It says "Dear Tom."

'Yeh?'

"Dear Tom," it says, "I know this is not what you thought I should do. There is something I must tell you. I am going away from the farm and I am not coming back. There is something I have been doing." Emmett paused, not looking up. "There is something I have been doing. A long time." He was reading very slowly now, the words dry, disconnected. "A long time. I have been taking the money Emmett has

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been paying for the milk. I took it and kept it. Emmett has been paying a little every week but I kept it and I never told you." ' Emmett turned over the sheet and then flattened his hands down on the paper again, abruptly, the words going on again in the same dry disjointed way. "I took the money and now I can't put it back. I had about fifty pounds and it made Emmett clear. I know you had to know sometime, and so now you know." ' Emmett paused again and then suddenly seemed to read more easily, as if the words he were reading were really now the words on the page. "If you can forgive me it would be very nice. But don't ask me to come back because I can't come back. I don't know where I am going. I'm just going away because I can't be happy like I used to any longer. Yours truly, Edna," 'Emmett said.

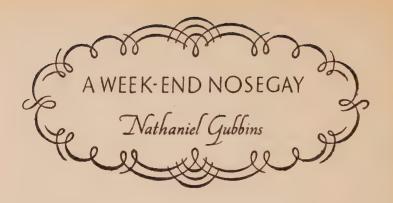
He ceased speaking in an open syllable, his tongue dry and slightly hanging forward, as if he were going to be sick. He did not raise his small black eyes or his hands. His eyes were bulging a little as he tried no think what might happen if he were asked to read the letter again, and terror went through him as he tried in vain to remember the order of the words.

He was still sitting like that when Tom got up and went out of the kitchen. Tom did not speak. He did not touch the letter. His big brown-fleshed arms were heavy and loose, not swinging, by his side. He walked straight out of the house, across the yard and by the corn stack, without raising his eyes, and then he stopped by the gate of the cornfield and stared across the land. The sun was very white on the empty stubble and a few clouds were gathering low down beyond the hedges of blackberry that were tangled like the walnut tree with blown strands of straw.

He stood there staring at the empty field, remembering many of the things that had happened in the summer. He remembered the pedestal table and the apples and the way the sun had browned her arms and face. He remembered the blue dress and the way she had looked without it and the movement of her body as she brushed her hair in the lamplight at night-time. He remembered how she had painted the house and how honest she was and how he had trusted her.

He stood there for a long time. Once he turned as if to go back, and then changed his mind. His eyes were short-focused and full of trouble. The yard was dark with big evening shadows and the little farm seemed to have shrunk in the evening sun.





THE SPARROWS

I

HAT,' asked The Sparrow's wife, 'am I supposed to do if there's an invasion?'
'Put on your gas mask and sit on your

damned eggs,' said The Sparrow.

dannied eggs, said The Sparrow

'Well, suppose the children are hatched when there's a gas attack?' asked his wife.

'Make little gas masks for them now,' shouted The Sparrow, 'and stop your chattering.'

The Sparrow was trying to read a hit of newspaper he had picked up in the garden.

'I don't see any reason why you should be rude,' said The Sparrow's wife, 'just because I ask a simple question'.

The Sparrow flung down his bit of newspaper.

'If you think "What am I to do if there's an invasion?" is a simple question,' said The Sparrow, 'you must be a bigger fool than I thought you were. The Government's been working that one out for months.'

'One at least expects one's husband to give one a

little advice at times of trouble,' said his wife, a tear starting in her eye.

'Oh does one?' said The Sparrow. 'And I suppose you think I know more than the Prime Minister. How many times has the Government told you to stay put?'

'I'm sure I don't know,' said his wife.

'Of course you don't,' said The Sparrow: 'you don't read the papers, you don't listen to the news. All you do is to lay eggs and ask fool questions.'

'I suppose I can speak if I like,' said his wife. 'I

suppose it's still a free country, isn't it?'

'No, it isn't,' said The Sparrow, 'and never was. Freedom is an illusion even in peace time.'

'I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about,' said his wife.

'Of course you don't know what I'm talking about,' shouted The Sparrow; 'you can't talk about anything but worms and hatching your silly eggs. So why start a conversation, anyway?'

'I've got to talk to somebody,' said his wife.

'In that case,' said The Sparrow, hopping out of his chair, 'you can damn well talk to yourself.'

'Where are you going?' asked his wife, the tears rolling down her beak, 'to that awful Treetops Club?'

'I am,' said The Sparrow as he flew away, 'and that's where you'll find me if there's an invasion. Staying put with a bottle of Scotch.'

2

THE SPARROW'S WIFE, her eyes bright with the light of battle and lipstick on her beak for the first time,

knocked sharply on the door of The Other Sparrow's Nest.

Inside a gay little voice was singing, 'Yes siree, yes siree, yes siree-e-e-e,' and The Other Sparrow, a negligee of fresh green moss flung across her wings, came to the door jerking her body, rolling her eyes, and shaking a claw in a passable imitation of a jitterbug.

'Good morning,' said The Sparrow's Wife.

'Good morning,' said The Other Sparrow, 'and what a lovely morning, too, after that dreadful winter. Doesn't it make you feel good and peppy? Yes siree, yes siree, yes siree-e-e-e.'

'I didn't come here to discuss the weather,' said The

Sparrow's Wife.

'You didn't?' said The Other Sparrow. 'Well, what would you like to talk about? The war?'

'I came here to talk about my husband,' said The Sparrow's Wife.

'Well, well, well,' said The Other Sparrow. 'I wonder which one that would be.'

'Do you think this is an occasion to boast?' asked The Sparrow's Wife.

'I wasn't boasting,' said The Other Sparrow. 'I was just wondering. Only yesterday a party called here about her husband. And was she burned up? Yes siree, yes siree, yes siree-e-e-e.'

'We live,' said The Sparrow's Wife, taking out her powder puff and dabbing nervously at her beak, 'at The Nest.'

'Oh,' said The Other Sparrow, 'so you're the wife of the fresh little guy that's always plastered? Well, I'll say you certainly have a tough proposition there. Come right in, honey, and let me fix you a drink.' 'I don't drink,' said The Sparrow's Wife.

'Well, come right in and sit down then,' said The Other Sparrow. 'And you don't have to sit on the edge of that chair. Sit right back and make yourself comfortable like your husband does.'

'I came here,' said The Sparrow's Wife, 'to ask you

to leave my husband alone.'

'Well, if that don't beat all,' said The Other Sparrow. 'I was just going to call on you to ask your husband to leave me alone.'

'There are many ways of rejecting a man's advances,' said The Sparrow's Wife.

'There certainly are,' said The Other Sparrow, 'but not one to stop that little guy. He certainly is one hell of a little guy. Yes ma'am.'

'Are you an American sparrow by any chance?'

asked The Sparrow's Wife.

'No, ma'am,' said The Other Sparrow, 'but I certainly get around to the pictures and listen to records. You ought to get around more yourself.'

'I have my home and children to look after,' said

The Sparrow's Wife.

'That's where you make a big mistake,' said The Other Sparrow. 'Nobody ever got any thanks for looking after children.'

'I don't need any lectures from you,' said The

Sparrow's Wife.

'That's O.K. with me,' said The Other Sparrow, 'but you might take a little advice about make-up. Is this the first time you've ever used lipstick?'

The Sparrow's Wife rose from her chair.

'I think I'll be going now,' she said.

'Not before I've fixed you up,' said The Other Sparrow. 'Why, honey, you can't go about like that,

with lipstick all over the place and powder in your eyes, looking like a clown.'

'I'll trouble you to let me pass,' said The Sparrow's

Wife, a tear starting in her eye.

'For Pete's sake don't cry on top of that powder,' said The Other Sparrow.

'Good morning,' said The Sparrow's Wife.

'Good-bye,' said The Other Sparrow, 'and put your hat straight and don't carry that handbag under your wing. Swing it, honey; swing it. And put on your best perfume when you get home. And your best house coat. And put the children to bed. And fix those worms in a new way. Then I'll send that little guy right back where he belongs. So long, honey. Whoopee.'

Soon after The Sparrow's Wife had flown out of The

Other Sparrow's Nest, The Sparrow flew in.

'Has she gone?' he asked.

'Yes siree, yes siree, yes siree-e-e-e,' sang The Other Sparrow.

3

^{&#}x27;WHAT ARE YOU doing for Easter?' asked The Sparrow's Wife.

^{&#}x27;What are you?' asked The Sparrow.

^{&#}x27;I'm asking you,' said his wife.

^{&#}x27;And I'm asking you,' said The Sparrow.

^{&#}x27;Shall we fly down to the sea?'

^{&#}x27;What for?' asked The Sparrow.

^{&#}x27;It might make a nice change,' said his wife.

^{&#}x27;And it might not,' said The Sparrow.

^{&#}x27;Well, it's different, isn't it?' asked his wife.

'What is?' asked The Sparrow.

'The sea,' said his wife.

'Different to what?' asked The Sparrow.

'Oh! you do ask silly questions,' said his wife.

'You shouldn't make silly remarks,' said The Sparrow.

'I could cut some worm and clover leaf sandwiches,' said his wife, 'and we could fly down in an hour.'

'And then what?' asked The Sparrow.

'Well,' said his wife, 'we could go on the pier or perhaps follow a picnic and pick up some cake crumbs.'

'Yes?' said The Sparrow.

'And then,' said his wife, 'perhaps we could bathe at the water's edge.'

'And after that?' said The Sparrow.

'Well,' said his wife, 'after that we could fly back.'

'Ninety miles for a couple of cake crumbs and a sit-me-down in cold salt water,' said The Sparrow. 'What ideas you have. What a brain.'

'You always put a damper on everything,' said his wife.

'Somebody's got to have some sense,' said The Sparrow.

'And it may not be cold at all,' said his wife. 'The sun may be as hot as hot.'

'What do you mean by as hot as hot?' asked The Sparrow. 'What sort of comparison is that?'

'I don't know what you are talking about,' said his wife.

'If you say a thing's hot,' shouted The Sparrow, 'we know that you mean it's hot. But if you want to tell us how hot it is you don't say it's as hot as hot because it doesn't make sense. You say it's as hot as fire or as hot as hell.'

'You don't have to use bad language,' said his wife.

sniffing and bringing out her handkerchief.

'And you don't have to start blubbering every time you're spoken to,' said The Sparrow. 'One of these days you'll have something to cry about.'

'Well, where are you going for Easter?' asked his

wife.

'Where do you think?' said The Sparrow.

'That awful Treetops Club, I suppose,' said his wife.

'You're right for once,' said The Sparrow, diving out of the nest.

A few moments later The Sparrow flew into The Other Sparrow's nest.

'Hullo, Sex Appeal,' said The Sparrow. 'What about flying down to the sea for Easter?'

'It's O.K. by me, fresh guy,' said The Other Sparrow. 'You certainly do get some good ideas.'

'I certainly do,' said The Sparrow.

4

THE OTHER SPARROW, in her negligee of green moss, was shaking cocktails. The Sparrow was standing by her fireside warming his tail.

'The only real difficulty about my life,' said The Sparrow, 'is that I'm misunderstood.'

'You don't say?' said The Other Sparrow.

'It's a funny thing,' said The Sparrow, 'that nobody has ever understood me except you.'

'You certainly are an open book to me,' said The

Other Sparrow. 'One of those books that get banned.'

'You needn't be unkind,' said The Sparrow.

'Carry on with your life story, honey,' said The Other Sparrow. 'We'll get it published in Paris.'

'What my wife doesn't realise,' said The Sparrow, 'is that I'm temperamental. One day I'm up . . .'

'And the next day you're down,' said The Other Sparrow.

'Yes,' said The Sparrow. 'Right down in the depths of depression. My wife doesn't understand that.'

'Doesn't she know it's boozer's gloom?' asked The

Other Sparrow.

'My wife,' said The Sparrow, 'is a very simple woman.'

'She must be,' said The Other Sparrow.

'And what's more,' said The Sparrow, 'she's a good woman.'

'Only good women wear hats like hers,' said The Other Sparrow.

'I'm not going to stand here and listen to insults about my wife,' said The Sparrow.

'Then sit down and listen,' said The Other Sparrow. 'And have a drink.'

She pushed The Sparrow into her best arm-chair

and put a glass in his claw.

'I'm just one of those people who can't stand a humdrum life,' said The Sparrow. 'I must have entertainment. Otherwise my work would suffer.'

'What work?' asked The Other Sparrow.

'I have to catch worms,' said The Sparrow.

'Is there anything special about that?' asked The Other Sparrow.

'There's an art in everything,' said The Sparrow.

'How you can spot them with a hangover is a miracle to me,' said The Other Sparrow.

'I think I'd better be going,' said The Sparrow.

'Not before you've helped me with the black-out,' said The Other Sparrow, switching on the gramophone. 'Shall we dance?'

'What's for supper to-night?' asked The Sparrow, whirling her round.

'It's a surprise,' said The Other Sparrow.

'You look wonderful to-night,' said The Sparrow. 'Like . . .'

'Like what?' asked The Other Sparrow.

'Like you,' said The Sparrow.

'You certainly have a gift for original expression,' said The Other Sparrow. 'Why don't you write for the papers?'

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5

'YOU'D BETTER GO now before the warning,' said The Other Sparrow, 'you can't leave your wife alone in an air raid again.'

'Just one more,' said The Sparrow. His claw was round her waist as they stood at the entrance of The Other Sparrow's Nest.

'No,' said The Other Sparrow, pushing his beak away.

'Please,' said The Sparrow.

'Don't be greedy.'

She slapped his claw gently and held her beak out of reach.

The siren wailed.

'There you are,' said The Other Sparrow, 'and now what are you going to do?'

'Make a dash for it, I suppose,' said The Sparrow.

'Then you'd better go now before the shrapnel starts flying around,' said The Other Sparrow.

'It won't bother me,' said The Sparrow puffing out his chest.

'Those are the cocktails talking,' said The Other Sparrow.

'Let's have another.'

The Sparrow with his claw still firmly round her waist walked towards the cocktail cabinet.

'Don't you ever think about your wife?' asked The Other Sparrow.

'Not if I can help it,' said The Sparrow.

'It ought to touch your heart that she looks to you for protection,' said The Other Sparrow.

'What can I do anyway?' asked The Sparrow. 'Catch the bombs and throw them back?'

'You can comfort her,' said The Other Sparrow. 'All women like to be comforted.'

'Do they?'

The Sparrow's claw tightened round her waist and his little bright eyes half closed into a leer.

'Now, now,' said The Other Sparrow, handing him a cocktail.

'Sweetheart,' said The Sparrow.

'Don't get fresh,' said The Other Sparrow, 'you've got to fly home in a minute.'

The guns cracked.

'Can't go now,' said The Sparrow, rubbing his beak into the feathers on her shoulder. 'Shrapnel.'

'Coward,' said The Other Sparrow.

'I don't want to be a hero,' said The Sparrow, 'to hell with it.'

'Your wife's probably nervous,' said The Other Sparrow.

'Probably nervous,' repeated The Sparrow, 'she's

probably got the howling wind-up.'

There was a whistle in the air above followed by a swishing sound and an explosion that shook the nest on its branch.

'Rotten shot,' said The Other Sparrow, tossing back her cocktail. 'Have another drink?'

'Hooray,' said The Sparrow. 'Let's.'

With a steady claw The Other Sparrow mixed the drinks as she sang 'Home, Sweet Home.'

'You certainly can take it,' said The Sparrow.

'Right on the chin,' said The Other Sparrow.

'This is your finest hour,' said The Sparrow.

'Can that stuff,' said The Other Sparrow, 'what are you having for supper?'

'Worms à la maison,' said The Sparrow.

'And for afters?'

'You,' said The Sparrow, whirling her round in a dance.

THE SWEEP

I

'WELL,' said The Sweep, 'and ow are you gittin on?'

'All right,' I said.

'I see they ain't blowed your ead orf yet,' said The Sweep.

'Not yet,' I said.

'Though they seem to be avin a good try,' said The Sweep.

'They do an all.'

'Cor sufferin wars, what a life,' said The Sweep. 'Talk about ere to-day and gorn to-morrer. Cor crikey, you don't know if you'll be ere the next minute let alone the next day.'

'Too true you don't.'

'Yet I see by the papers,' said The Sweep, 'that little old Itler's a pacifist by nature and loves all umanity.'

'Go on,' I said.

'Though I don't suppose that includes us,' said The Sweep.

'It don't seem like it,' I said.

'Or if it do,' said The Sweep, 'little old Itler's got a funny way of showing is affection.'

'He as an all,' I said.

'If I remember rightly,' said The Sweep, 'little old Itler ad a funny way of showin affection for is pals.'

'He certainly ad,' I said.

'He done them all in,' said The Sweep, 'so he could start afresh with a new lot.'

'That's right,' I said.

'And what's wrong with that?' asked The Sweep.

'Nothink,' I said.

'It makes a nice change,' said The Sweep.

'It certainly do,' I said.

'But cor stone the crows, what a pal,' said The Sweep.

'What a pal,' I said.

'All the same,' said The Sweep, 'I daresay little old Itler reckons he's doing the right thing.'

'He probably do,' I said.

'I daresay he thought the world would be better orf without is pals,' said The Sweep.

'I daresay,' I said.

'And he might think that the world would be better orf without us,' said The Sweep.

'That's right,' I said.

'Though, on the other and,' said The Sweep, 'we might think the world would be better orf without im.'
'Too true,' I said.

'It all depends on your point of view,' said The Sweep.

'It do,' I said.

'So what are you a-grumblin at?' asked The Sweep.

'I ain't,' I said.

'And seein that you might be in Kingdom Come afore you can swaller that there pint,' said The Sweep, 'what about pushin the boat out?'

'Certainly,' I said.

'You don't want to start oarding your lousy coppers at a time like this,' said The Sweep.

'I don't,' I said.

'You can't take em with you,' said The Sweep.

'You can't,' I said.

'So mine's a quart,' said The Sweep, 'and ere's to the skin orf your nose.'

'The skin off yourn,' I said.

'Cor sufferin Mike, what a game,' said The Sweep. 'Cor chase my Aunt Fanny round the bomb craters.' 'Cor,' I said.

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'WELL, cor stone the crows,' said The Sweep, 'if that don't take the birthday cake.'

'What do?' I asked.

'Why,' said The Sweep, 'little old Goering kiddin imself he's descended from royalty. Cor strike a light.'

'Cor,' I said.

'And do you know what that's a sign of?' asked The Sweep.

'No,' I said.

'It's a sign that e's gorn orf is ead,' said The Sweep. 'Go on?' I said.

'One of the first signs of a man goin orf is ead,' said The Sweep, 'is gettin big ideas about imself.'

'Well,' I said.

'And the more he is orf is ead,' said The Sweep, 'the bigger ideas he gits.'

'Fancy,' I said.

'Why,' said The Sweep, 'practically everybody inside a lunatic asylum thinks he's somethink that he ain't. Some think they're kings and some think they're dooks and some think they're earls, accordin to ow they feel. And very nice, too.'

'Very nice,' I said.

'There's no arm done,' said The Sweep.

'None at all,' I said.

'And so long as you think you're a king or a dook,' said The Sweep, 'why, cor sufferin blimey, you're just as appy as if you was one. And mebbe a bloody sight appier."

'Mebbe,' I said.

'Personally meself,' said The Sweep, 'I'd sooner be King of the Nutouse than King of any of these ere Balkans.'

'Same ere,' I said.

'When you're King of the Nutouse,' said The Sweep, 'you do know you've got the job for life.'

'That's right,' I said.

'Which is more than some of these ere Balkan Kings can say,' said The Sweep.

'Too true,' I said.

'And it's more than little old Goering can say,' said The Sweep.

'It certainly is,' I said.

'If that there Jerry Air Force don't do a bit better next time,' said The Sweep, 'I reckon little old Goering will be for the igh jump.'

'He will an all,' I said.

'And peraps that's been gittin on is mind,' said The Sweep.

'Peraps,' I said.

'All the same,' said The Sweep, 'if he don't become King of Germany (or maybe he thinks King of England) he can always go back to that there Swedish Nutouse where he come from and be King of that.'

'He can,' I said.

'That's to say,' said The Sweep, 'if somebody with a gun don't git im first.'

'That's right,' I said.

'Cor sufferin wars,' said The Sweep, 'Cor chase my Aunt Fanny round the padded cell.'

'Cor,' I said.

*

'WELL, cor sufferin blimey,' said The Sweep, 'if that don't beat everythink.'

'What do?' I asked.

'Why,' said The Sweep, 'little old Itler movin is eadquarters to Vienna because Berlin was bombed. Cor stone the crows, it makes you think, don't it?'

'Not arf it don't,' I said.

'There's a man,' said The Sweep, 'who's been talking about what he done in the larst war ever since that there booze-up he ad in is Munich beer cellar.'

'That's right,' I said.

'And when it comes to a bit of bombin,' said The Sweep, 'he ain't got the guts of them there little old London typists.'

'Too true he ain't,' I said.

'And what about little old Churchill?' asked The Sweep. 'You don't find im leaving London, not when they was bombin night and day.'

'You certainly don't,' I said.

'And he ain't got the deepest shelter in the world like little old Itler neither,' said The Sweep. 'In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if little old Churchill didn't ave no shelter at all.'

'Nor me,' I said.

'And when do you ear little old Churchill talkin about what he done in the larst war or the war before that?' asked The Sweep.

'Never,' I said.

'No,' said The Sweep, 'and you never will, though I reckon he's got a lot more to talk about than little old Itler.'

'Ear, ear,' I said.

'But you don't want to git nasty about little old Itler,' said The Sweep.

'Me?' I said.

'What would the Germans do,' asked The Sweep, 'if a man like that got blowed up?'

'Search me,' I said.

'Why, cor strike a light,' said The Sweep, 'they might ave a bit of peace for once.'

'They might,' I said.

'Without a man like that to tell them they was ard done by,' said The Sweep, 'they might be appy in their own country.'

'That's right,' I said.

'Which would make a nice change,' said The Sweep.

'Very nice,' I said.

'But if little old Itler runs orf to Vienna when Berlin's bombed,' said The Sweep, 'where do you reckon little old Mussolini's going to run to when Rome's bombed?'

'No idea,' I said.

'Cor luvaduck,' said The Sweep, 'the world won't be big enough for im then.'

'It certainly won't,' I said.

'I'd give a quart to see im bolting for the shelter,' said The Sweep. 'Cor sufferin Mike. Cor chase my Aunt Fanny round Abyssinia.'

'Cor,' I said.

*

4

'WELL,' said The Sweep, 'it's nice to know they're feedin the army better, ain't it?'

'It is and all,' I said.

'So that when they git me and you in uniform agin we shall be eatin like a couple of orficers,' said The Sweep.

'That's right,' I said.

'No more bully beef stew with an arf cooked pertater in it,' said The Sweep.

'No,' I said.

'No more tea boiled in the stew pot without any milk nor sugar, but a nice elpin of grease on top,' said The Sweep.

'No,' I said.

'To say nothing of a pinch of Epsom salts dropped in to give it a flavour,' said The Sweep.

'No,' I said.

'And no more breakfasts of dog biscuits and bacon fat because the quarter-bloke ad flogged the rations for beer money,' said The Sweep.

'That's right,' I said.

'I see they are a chef from a London otel to look after the cookin now,' said The Sweep.

'Go on?' I said.

'Accordin to the papers,' said The Sweep, 'he as been used to servin up sole bong fem and bombe surprises. Cor suffering blimey, he'll git a few bomb surprises if anythink starts.'

'He certainly will,' I said.

'I expect you remember,' said The Sweep, 'that we ad to ave perfect teeth before they allowed us to join the army.'

'I do,' I said.

'And when they was sure our teeth was all right,' said The Sweep, 'they give us nothink to eat with them.'

'Too true,' I said.

'And now we ain't got no teeth,' said The Sweep.

'Speak for yourself,' I said.

'Now we ain't got no teeth,' said The Sweep, 'they're goin to give us plenty. Cor stone me blind, it makes you think, don't it?'

'Don't it?' I said.

'Still,' said The Sweep, 'you'll be all right with your little old typewriter. You can sit in the orderly room and be the colonel's typist. Cor strike a light.'

'Thank you,' I said.

'Though I expect he'd sooner ave a blonde,' said The Sweep.

'I expect he would,' I said.

'And when you done is letters,' said The Sweep, 'you can go and ave a sole bong fem like a gentleman. Cor crikey.'

'Cor luvus,' I said.

'Cor stuff me with bombs surprises,' said The Sweep.

'If it comes to that,' I said, 'Cor stuff me with sole bong fem, sole bong omme, chicken à la King and chicken à la Queen.'

CONVERSATIONS WITH SALLY THE CAT

I

'I HAVE a letter from a naval lieutenant about a cat who wants to meet you.'

'Oh?'

'He was born at sea, has spent most of his time at sea, and knows very little about shore life.'

'How extraordinary.'

'He is a black cat, and they call him Nigger.'

'How frightfully original of them.'

'He will fight anything. Dogs dare not go near the gangway when the ship is in port.'

'They could hardly go near the gangway when the

ship is not in port.'

'He also drinks rum, and a snapshot is enclosed with the letter showing Nigger joining in a rousing chorus.'

'I think it is more likely to be a snapshot of him yawning.'

'You're in a very cynical mood to-day.'

'I am only facing facts.'

'Do you want to meet this cat or not?'

'I am not over anxious.'

'A jolly, rollicking sailor cat with the tang of the sea in his fur.'

'And the smell of rum on his breath.'

'Do you object to cats drinking?'

'Whiskers that are dipped in rum shall never mix with mine.'

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2

'HUNDREDS of readers have written to me pointing out that a London dealer is advertising for 1,000 male kittens.'

'Hundreds of readers?'

'Well, four to be exact.'

'Why didn't you say so at first?'

'I wanted to give everybody the impression that I have a large post.'

'Why did they write to you about it?'

'Considering your reputation it is only natural that the nation should turn to you in a crisis of this description.'

'Does the nation expect me to produce 1,000 kittens?'

'The nation doesn't think it's beyond you, especially as ginger kittens are preferred.'

'I regard that as an insult to the Ginger Cat and

myself.'

'No insult was intended. You should both regard it as National Service.'

'I think it's a great pity that you have to be funny about serious matters.'

'That's what I'm paid for. Besides, we might make a bit on the side. They're offering 18s. a dozen—more than you can get for eggs.'

'I refuse to make money out of my children.'

'You needn't. I'll make it.'

'I refuse to allow anybody to make money out of my children.'

'Listen, sister. This is a smooth racket. All you have to do is to make it up with the boy friend.'

'Love that is gone can never be recalled.'

'Don't mix up love with business. I tell you there's money in it.'

'Let the dead past bury its dead.'

'Don't get morbid. Ask him round to supper.'

'I gave him my youth and my young love. So many illusions shattered. So many dreams trodden in the dust.'

3

'I SEE BY the papers that a cat walked a hundred miles in 270 days. What do you think he did that for?' 'How should I know?'

'You are more familiar with the habits of tom-cats than I am. Do you think it was a love affair?'

'Possibly.'

'But a hundred miles seems a long way to keep an appointment, especially if you have to walk.'

'Love knows neither time nor distance.'

'What is the longest distance any of your boy friends have walked?'

'They have walked from the ends of the earth over the face of the world.'

'Swimming the seven seas and limping across the five continents?'

'Indifferent to danger, suffering hunger and thirst, climbing snow-capped mountains, toiling through burning deserts.'

'Ransacking the dustbins of east and west, cadging milk from the doorsteps of Babylon and Birmingham. Cats must be great enthusiasts. . . .'

'I beg your pardon?'

'You know what I mean.'

'You mean they must be great lovers?'

'Yes. Or great liars.'

*

THE GINGER CAT'S LETTERS TO HIS SON

MY DEAR SON,

In these letters I do not propose to advise you, because advice is useless. Those who seek it only wish for confirmation of their own opinions and those who have it thrust upon them never listen. I only hope to guide you in the light of my own experience, believing you will follow.

Since the life of a tom-cat is inseparable from shecats I shall probably make the relationship between the sexes the main subject of my letters, though I shall also touch upon such matters as how to manage the human beings who run your home, how to get through a larder window in the black-out, how to push open a dustbin lid with your nose and how to deal with cat lovers who call you 'pretty pussy.'

At this moment I don't suppose you are interested in she-cats. The only one you have known is your mother, who is now useless to you except as a plaything, and I can see you now biting her tail and jumping at her from behind cover. I can also see you chasing a pingpong ball down the passage and crouching in the long grass, pretending you are a tiger in the jungle. It makes me long to be a kitten again.

Nevertheless, you are growing up fast, and soon life will offer new and exciting adventures.

As one who can claim to have enjoyed a moderate success with she-cats, I think I can say, without fear of contradiction from any but the callow and inexperienced, that the war between the sexes is an eternal war with an occasional armistice. When once this fact is realised a sensible cat will adopt warlike methods and develop the will to win. He will also realise that attack is the best defence and smack a she-cat down even before an introduction is effected. I shall always remember smacking my first she-cat down. I had no interest in her whatever, because she was a plain girl, rusty black with a thin tail and spindly legs, and I suppose I did it just to amuse myself. She got up and made a half-

hearted swipe at me. So I smacked her down again. And again and again till she didn't know what was hitting her. After that she followed me around for weeks simply asking for another smack in the puss (which she usually got), and I had the utmost difficulty in getting rid of her.

Another thing to remember about she-cats is that they never appear to know their own minds, though, of course, they always do. They're often trying to find out if you know yours. But that is a big subject which cannot be dealt with in a few sentences, and which will probably be the subject of my next letter.

In the meanwhile, my dear son, keep yourself fit and clean. Make yourself useful by catching mice and and win the affection of those in charge of the kitchen. And don't tease your mother too much. Remember she was good to you when you were very young.

Your affectionate father, THE GINGER CAT.

2

My DEAR SON,

Soon you will be leaving your old home for a new one, with new people, new sheltered corners by the fire, new and exciting smells of mice grown careless in a catless house, and of old furniture mellowed by time and made cosy by long use and happy associations.

As all kittens are attractive I daresay the people in the house will make a great fuss of you. The women will get excited and squeak a lot and snatch you from the floor and hold you tight till you can hardly breathe. This sudden snatching from the floor, as you have

probably found out already, is hard to bear, because the upward rush makes you feel dizzy and these big, heavy-handed girls don't know their own strength. I have often wondered how they would like to be grabbed by a giant when they were powdering their noses and whirled through the air. In these trying circumstances it is advisable to keep your temper, though if they maul you too much a scratch or two won't do them any harm.

When the excitement has died down and you have had your saucer of warm milk (you won't get any butter on your paws these days), it's not a bad idea to go over the house, searching all cupboards for mouse holes, trying out the softest beds, memorising chairs in quiet rooms and noting all exits. A visit to the kitchen is essential, though I doubt if I have to tell a son of mine that.

The next thing to consider is your attitude towards the people in the house. Don't think I am trying to advise you about this. All cats have a natural dignity, and I know you will never make yourself cheap. But sometimes kittens are impulsive and are apt to rub themselves against the legs of the wrong people. You will find as you grow older that those who make the greatest fuss about you are not always your best friends. Hysterical people are never to be trusted. When they are tired of you as a novelty they might even forget to put out your dinner.

Therefore a wise kitten will stand aloof from all those who call him 'pretty pussy' and 'kitty, kitty,' and play with him when he is in no mood for playing. They probably mean well. All bores do. But the one to watch for is the one who, like a cat, also stands aloof and waits to be approached. In him (and it's usually a 'him') you will find a true companion, one who will

never tire of throwing the pingpong ball or pretending there's a mouse under a sheet of newspaper. He is also the one who will never forget you when the milk is poured out at tea-time and who will often bring you home titbits from the city.

If you are fortunate enough to meet such a man, my son, you could do no better for your future prospects than to win his affections. He is one who understands cats and such people are rare. But there I go offering you advice when I never intended to. Sometimes it's difficult not to advise the young.

Wishing you all happiness in your new home.

I remain

Your affectionate father, THE GINGER CAT.

3

MY DEAR SON.

Now that you have settled down in your new home, I expect you will be making a tour of the neighbouring gardens, seeking new friendships among your own kind. You will be invited to join mouse-hunting meets, larder raids, and dustbin parties.

Although, as I have said before in these letters, I would prefer to guide you rather than offer advice, I think that the experience of an old cat, who was (and still is) no mean hand at the art of lady-killing, might help you to model your future conduct towards the opposite sex. Shyness of the young male in the presence of females is natural enough, and is sometimes regarded as an engaging, often endearing, quality; but when shyness becomes gaucherie and finally degenerates into

downright bad manners, there is little hope of social advancement or of enchanting conquests in the lists of love.

Therefore, my dear son, when you are at your first dustbin party and your ears feel hot and your paws too big for you, don't try to hide your nervousness by biting other cats' tails or boxing with your friends. Sometimes these boxing matches, begun in play, end in a free fight in which the unfortunate hostess is often involved, and the party becomes a dismal failure.

What to do with your paws is, I know, a difficult problem for young cats. I have always found that the best way is to sit still with your front paws together and your tail curled round them.

Young tom-cats also show a tendency to ignore the she-cats and crowd together in sullen groups until the food appears. This is embarrassing to a hostess, who naturally likes to see the young people mix freely, though, of course, not too freely. Another gaucherie common to adolescent males is to begin a nervous licking of legs the moment they are introduced to a she-cat. For heaven's sake, my dear son, perform your toilet before you go to a party. If you care to benefit from my personal experiences and behave correctly and acquire poise, I am sure, with your handsome looks, you will achieve considerable success with the ladies. And I can assure you that this is not so difficult as it may at first appear.

Meanwhile, my dear son, my best wishes for your social success.

Your affectionate father,
THE GINGER CAT.

MY DEAR SON,

You are approaching the age of adolescence, when you will meet the First Girl Friend. To most young cats this is a very trying time. You will be self-conscious and shy in the presence of she-cats. Your approach will be awkward and sometimes your acute embarrassment will express itself in boorish behaviour.

No doubt you have noticed among cats of a different upbringing that this boorishness takes the form of spitting and slapping and pushing the girl friend off the tiles. And it must be said that she-cats of a certain type do not appear to resent this odd manifestation of a tender emotion.

Naturally, I would be surprised and shocked if a son of mine behaved in this manner and I would suggest that the natural desire to show one's strength and agility in the presence of the female might be more gracefully accomplished by demonstrations of athletic skill. Without descending to the ludicrous and undignified antics of the late Douglas Fairbanks, a young cat could charm and amuse the girl of his choice by climbing trees, walking along the top of a narrow fence, rushing up the curtains (if at home), or picking his way past the ornaments on the mantelpiece without breaking any. Chasing dogs is also a thrilling spectacle for she-cats, though I advise you to try small ones at first.

It is also advisable to be perfectly frank with the First Girl Friend. Tell her at once that you are too young to contemplate a settled life, that one's views and tastes change as one grows older, and that if she cares to continue the friendship on that understanding you will be honoured. If you do this you will experience none of the embarrassment of entering into an unsuitable

partnership nor the shame of breaking your pledged word.

Later on, my dear son, I hope you will meet what the Americans call your 'steady.' She will come, I trust, from a good home and background and will be as beautiful as she is domesticated, like your mother Sally. At the moment you may think that a good home and background is of no importance, but remember that you will be spending most of your time in her garden and possibly her kitchen. And a larder well stocked by people who can afford a few luxuries is not to be despised in these difficult times.

I am proud to hear that you have no fear of air raids and sleep on the best bed on the top floor while the family is in the shelter. That is the spirit that is winning the war.

Your affectionate father,

THE GINGER CAT.

5

MY DEAR SON,

Last week I told you that after meeting The First Girl Friend (and maybe the second and third) you would eventually meet your steady—the she-cat who will be your partner for life.

This will be an experience you will never forget. You may meet her first at a dustbin party, or walking down the garden path, or mouse-hunting, or washing her face in the sunny corner of the porch. Wherever it is you will know at first glance that you were made for each other. Perhaps you will be attracted first by her white paws, with a glimpse of clean pink pads as she licks them daintily, or the set of her ears, or the wide wonder

of her green eyes, or the sweep of her whiskers, or the way she carries her tail. You will be humble in her presence and tremble deliciously at the sound of her voice.

All this will pass, because an emotion so intense cannot be endured for long. And I venture to predict that you will regret its passing. Those first mad weeks when food is distasteful and sleep is uneasy and you think only of your next meeting under the stars (or even in the rain), will, with the inexorable march of time, become nothing but a lovely memory, and the she-cat you thought was a goddess will become a dear little thing, a pretty little thing, a wise and lovable little thing, but, all the same, just the nicest little she-cat in the world and nothing more.

This is as it should be, because it is impossible to live comfortably with a goddess. When white hot passion has cooled you will find more enduring things, like understanding and friendship, and the day will come when you are invited to her home to meet her people.

'Meeting the folks' (as the Americans put it) with grace and charm is not an easy social accomplishment. Her mother will probably think there is nobody in the world good enough for her little girl, and will no doubt tell you of the innumerable tom-cats who have sought her favours and have been disdainfully rejected. Her father may be critical and exacting. He may be old and deaf, with ears broken in many a fight. Even if he likes you he may bore you to death with the tale of the rat he caught when his teeth were sound, and you should be tolerant if the rat grows bigger with each telling.

Whatever may be your feelings, my dear son, make yourself agreeable to her parents, for that is only common courtesy and the least you can do for the girl of your choice. Remember, they are taking a big chance

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by accepting you into the family, and in any case they may be much nicer cats than you think. And when the first awkward meeting is over perhaps the steady will take you round your future home and show you her favourite draughtproof corners, the way into the larder window and the cushions with the cosy smells. And after that, perhaps the most delightful of all experiences, your first supper together.

Your mother sends her love and says she is too busy

with the new kittens to write.

Your affectionate father, THE GINGER CAT.

My DEAR SON,

Meeting 'the only girl in the world' was, I think, the subject of my last letter. This time we will discuss settling down with her, which is not nearly so exciting.

Of course, the first few weeks will be wonderful. To be always with her, to have her with you wherever you go, to share the same chair by the fire, to be relieved of the torture of separation, even for a moment, will be the realisation of all your dreams. But after a time you will both discover that you are getting on each other's nerves. This is quite natural, and should cause no heartburnings or doubts. Two cats cannot always want to do the same things at the same time. There will be occasions when you need the company of tom-cats (perhaps a bachelor party round the dustbin), and there will be occasions when she, like Greta Garbo, wants to be alone.

As you get older, my dear son, you will realise that

one certain way to the heart of a she-cat is to be sensitive to her moods. She does not always want to have her ears washed. Nor is she always ready for a game of hide-and-seek behind the sofa. She may want to go for a walk or merely go to sleep. To ignore her immediate desires is to invite spitting and scratching and face slapping. It will be difficult not to hit back, and you will find yourself involved in your first quarrel.

Making it up after the first quarrel can be a delightful experience. You will both be very sorry about it all, and you will probably end the day with your paws round each other's necks exchanging licks on the cushions with the cosy smells. It is when the quarrels become regular and there is no making up that your partnership will reveal itself as a failure. And all through being incapable

of sympathetic understanding.

And oh, I almost forgot. The kittens. The first kittens. These will be a great joy to both of you. I can think of nothing so thrilling as the first sight of your very own kittens (at least we hope they're your own) and the first touch of their tiny paws on your nose when you turn them over on their backs to wash their tummies. Naturally, the novelty begins to wear off after the first hundred, but then, my dear son, boredom is the penalty of experience. The best fish dinner in the world never tastes so good as the one you shared with your mother when you could only just walk to the plate. I remember you sat in the middle of the plate and ate round yourself. How proud your mother was.

I shall be writing to you again soon, my dear son.

Isn't it pleasant to have spring with us again?

Your affectionate father, THE GINGER CAT. MY DEAR SON,

In these letters I have endeavoured to show you a way of life through the difficult years of kittenhood, adolescence and maturity. In this last letter I shall try to show you how to grow old gracefully.

Old age is universally feared because of the delusion that there can be no happiness when the pleasures and excitements of youth have passed. But has it ever occurred to you that there is no happiness in excitement, and that the grand passion itself can be an unendurable agony? Where, for instance, is the happiness in gnawing doubt and mad jealousy? Where is the peace in endless strife and frustrated endeayour?

Young as you are, I daresay you have already experienced these things. How many sleepless nights have you spent on the garden wall straining your eyes in the darkness for a glimpse of her white paws? How many savage fights have you had while, at a little distance, she waited, unconcerned, to bestow her favours on the winner? If you have been fighting I hope you acquitted yourself well and remembered that left-right-left I taught you and that knock-out bite in the stomach.

While you are young life will be a continuous battle. Even in middle age the urge to renew your youth in the society of a young she-cat will be strong and you will find yourself fighting your battles over again when you are ill-equipped for victory.

This is natural enough, but unsatisfactory to both parties. For you will find that there is little in common between youth and age. When you want to sit by the fire and doze she will want to go places or play with the pingpong ball. If you refuse, she will find a younger cat to amuse her and if you accept her challenge you will

only look foolish. There is no more pathetic sight than an old cat catching cold on the tiles or playing ball in the parlour. How soon he tires and how self-conscious he looks when he realises he has lost his dignity.

So be your age, my dear son, whatever it is. Youth cannot be renewed, so you might as well accept the situation. And if you reach old age in good health, you will find that here is peace at last. In the summer you can watch the world go by from the sunny porch and in the winter you can sleep your days away in the deep arm-chair. Even mice won't interest you any more, and the frettings and the fumings of the young will seem trivial and unimportant.

I have always wanted to be proud of you. And so far I have been. I have every reason to believe I shall be proud of you in the future.

So there is nothing for me to do but wish you a long life and happy one. Your mother joins me in these wishes.

Your affectionate father,
THE GINGER CAT.

MEN I KNOW

1. TED MIFFIN, THE MAN

(Being the first of a series of brilliant articles, MEN I KNOW, by Mrs. Eliza Miffin, the only charwoman with sex appeal.)

most men are easy to andle if you know ow though I must say that mr miffin my late usband was a bit of a problem.

mr miffin was a proper itler in the ome and ad wot i see the papers say itler as—delusions of grandeur—though meself i-should say he was too big for is boots.

mr miffin give up work on is weddin day and would

never lift a finger in the ome nor anywhere else.

mr miffin always ad is breakfast in bed and never got up till the clock struck twelve and the ouse was properly aired.

mr miffin always used to say early risin was all right

for foreigners and the lower classes but not for im.

although he come of a workinclass family imself mr miffin always eld he was never brought up to work an used to ask me whats the use of both of us workin.

if mr miffin ad been of the larky sporty tipe i wouldn't ave minded im anging about the ouse all day but most of the time he was idden behind the racin news and never opened is mouth except to put food in it.

if visitors come to the ouse mr miffin would sometimes walk straight out of the front door with not so much as an ow do you do or a by your leave or if it was cold an wet stay at ome and make sarky remarks.

mr miffin was not exactly andsome being rather liverish aving no proper work and a bit on the pasty side with a black andle bar mustache and long nose and ears which he always kidded imself was a sign of breedin.

all the same if mr miffin ad taken me only once to the pictures and adnt thought he ad married beneath imself while livin on my money we might ave made a go of it.

as it was i wasnt sorry to see him drop off the ooks though i wore me weeds for a year after.

2. GEORGE BUMBLING—THE MAN

(Continuing the brilliant series of articles, MEN I KNOW, by Mrs. Eliza Miffin, the charwoman with oomph.)

some men are born to conquer us weak women and some aint.

mr george bumbling the village andy man is one that aint.

as i have said before i like a man who is larky and sporty with somethink of the devil in im.

whatever mr bumbling as in im it aint that.

mr bumbling is what I should call a bit of a misery bein rather on the morbid side with no surprises and nothink much to say.

all the same mr bumbling is steady and reliable and would make a good usband for a lady who wasnt too particular.

mr bumbling as bin courtin me on an orf for goin on five years an i can say without a word of a lie that never once as my eart beat faster at the sight of im nor ave i felt a thrill at is touch like they do on the pictures.

it aint natural for a lady to be thrilled by the touch of a gentleman who as bin busy with leaky pipes and cisterns all day.

still mr bumbling was useful as a escort to parties an the pictures and i ope my lady readers wont blame me for leadin im on and takin all without givin much in return.

a lady is entitled to the omage a gentleman will pay to er beauty and i ave always maintained an always shall that a squeeze of the and in the pictures is better than nothink to a gentleman admirer though i know some ladies think it is kinder to tell them where they git for right at the start.

man is always the unter and mr bumbling ad is chance.

i can only say e wasnt much good at untin which is the trouble with a lot of gentlemen.

if mr bumbling as nothink else he as is memories though they aint much.

next week i shall deal with a very different tipe—a proper card and a born unter though married with six children—when i shall write a fearless article called my friend the postman.

3. MY FRIEND THE POSTMAN

(Being the last of a brilliant series of articles, MEN I KNOW, by Mrs. Eliza Miffin, the charwoman with yippy.)

no lady likes a moody miserable gentleman even if his eart is in the right place.

a lady likes a gentleman who takes life as a lark but what also as a serious side and is iding a secret sorrow with a laugh and a joke.

ladies also like gentlemen who ave ad a bit of a past and not like mr bumbling who spends is spare time moonin about and breedin pigs.

my friend the postman takes life as a lark and as a secret sorrow which is a wife and six children if you can call that a secret.

when I first see the postman somethink passed between us which I find ard to explain.

all i know is my stummick turned to water as it

still does if he gives me a straight look and my knees went like jelly.

my friend the postman is tall for a postman, knows ow to wear a uniform and as blue eyes with a bit of sauce in them, a touch of grey at the temples, a boyish tuft of air stickin up at the back of is ead which ladies always want to smooth down an wears is cap at a angle like the late admiral beatty.

all the same I think the most fascinating thing about the postman is that you never know what he is goin to do next.

one minit he is larkin with you putting up the curtains in the parlour or pullin down your back air and the next he as gorn serious and talks about the inner meanin of life.

the postman and me ave the same tastes as we both like parties and a drop of nourishin stout and i dare say if it adnt been for is wife an children weddin bells would ave rung for us.

as it is our friendship as never done nobody no arm as what the eye dont see the eart dont grieve over and i for one would never break up a ome even if the wife is a slut who dont deserve to ave one.

far be it from me to say anythink against another lady especially when writing for the papers.

all i say is if gentlemen want the friendship of other ladies instead of goin ome to their lawful wedded wives its because their omes are run by lazy whinin slummocks who dont know nothink about cookin or ow to make a gentleman comfortable.

and namin no names there are mothers of six who ave let their figures go and never so much as trouble to put a drop of scent behind their ears after a days washin.

no gentleman wants to go ome to a kitchen full of

steam and a wife smellin of soap and nobody can blame a gentleman if he meets a lady friend what as made the best of erself.

with all these beauty ints in the papers there aint no excuse for any lady to look like a sack of pertaters though i admit it would take more than a int to do much for a certain party i could mention.

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AWFUL CHILD

I

'Does Hitler ever get indigestion?'

'I have no idea.'

'Does Goering ever get it?'

'According to the papers he is an inveterate afterdinner burper. It is part of his charm.'

'Why part of his charm?'

'Because the Germans admire grossness and vulgarity.'

'Why?'

'Because they are a gross and vulgar people who have never grown up.'

'Do all Germans burp after dinner?'

'When they have enough to eat the whole country is a pandemonium of hochs and burps.'

'And does Goering burp louder than any of them?'

'Yes.'

'Because he gets more to eat than the others?'

'Yes. And also because he wants to make himself

popular. A German's idea of a German god is a grosser, noisier, and more vulgar edition of himself.'

'Does Hitler burp?'

'There is no evidence that he does.'

'Then why is he so popular?'

'There is no evidence of that, either. He is admired for his success rather than loved for his personality.'

'But if he could burp they would love him as well?'

'Probably.'

'Then why doesn't he?'

'Because he can't.'

'Why?'

'Because he never eats too much.'

'Does his stomach ever growl at him?'

'Probably.'

'Because it's empty?'

'That's the usual reason.'

'What does he do then?'

'Gives it a cream bun.'

'Suppose it still growls?'

'Then he gives it another cream bun.'

'Well, suppose it goes on growling?'

'Then he goes on giving it cream buns.'

'Till he's sick?'

'Not necessarily.'

'Well, suppose it goes on growling when he can't eat any more cream buns.'

'Then he can't do anything about it.'

'I thought he could do everything.'

'Hitler's stomach is the one thing in Germany over which he has no control.'

'Shall I be able to finish writing my book?'

'Who's stopping you?'

'The Government.'

'So they've got to hear about that, have they?'

'Well, not exactly. But if they're rationing paper I won't be able to finish it.'

'Can't you write on both sides of the paper?'

'I have.'

'What about the margins?'

'I've written all over the margins.'

'You might use up some old envelopes?'

'The second chapter's written on old envelopes.'

'Both sides?'

'Yes.'

'And the margins all filled up?'

'Yes.'

'Who do you suppose is going to read it?'

'I thought you might.'

'I'd much rather hear about it. What's the book called?'

'Trouble in the Upper Third.'

'What sort of trouble? Measles?'

'No. There's a girl called Freda Strangeways who starts a revolution in the school and kills the games mistress with an Indian club.'

'Bit of a tomboy, eh?'

'Yes.'

'What's she like? Laughing blue eyes?'

'Yes.'

'With an unruly mop of golden curls?'

'Yes.'

'And a snub nose and an impudent chin?'

'How did you know?'

'Tomboys are the same all over the world. What does she do then?'

'Locks the headmistress in her study and sets fire to the school.'

'Does the headmistress escape?'

'No. She's burnt to death.'

'What happens to the other mistresses?'

'They're all burnt to death.'

'What does Freda do then?'

'She goes to a teashop and has a glass of milk.'

'That's a touch of genius. The cool, unruffled criminal drinks milk while her victims burn.'

'She's not a criminal.'

'What's she supposed to be? A sissy?'

'No. She's a heroine.'

'You mean she gets away with it?'

'Yes. She's presented to the King and gets the V.C.'

'You can't get a V.C. for murder and arson.'

'But all the mistresses were spies and she saves the country.'

'Oh, well, that's different.'

'Do you think I could have some of your paper to finish the book?'

'Why, certainly. We couldn't let a masterpiece like this go unfinished.'

'Thank you. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye.'

*

SHELTER CONVERSATIONS

1. ENGLISH

'They go boom a-booma-booma.'

'No they don't. They go booma-воома-воома.'

'No, darling. It's booma-booma

'Don't we hear enough German bombers without giving imitations?'

'I was only trying to get the engine noise right, darling.'

'It's not a bit like the real thing, anyway.'

'Brenda's now going round the shelters cheering people up with funny stories.'

'Surely they're getting enough hell without that.'

'My husband says it's nonsense to talk about whistling bombs. He says any bomb or projectile going through the air whistles or screams.'

'But these have special reeds on them to make it louder.'

'That's just fifth column rumour.'

'Brenda went into one shelter where they were all asleep. She woke them up and they threw empty soup cans at her.'

'I suppose there's no hope of a bomb hitting that woman?'

'Bores and busybodies live for ever, darling.'

'That makes Hitler practically immortal.'

'Why are they always hitting working-class districts?'

'Because the working classes are practically the only people who live near military objectives.' 'Actually it goes BOOMA-booma-BOOMA.' Not booma-BOOMA.'

'And bombs go c-r-r-rump and ack-ack guns bonk bonk.'

'Would anybody like to give farmyard imitations?'

'Margaret's father's starting a shelter romance with an old lady. She tells him about her rheumatism and he tells her about his feet.'

'I expect he'll talk her down about his feet in the end.'

'My husband says the only people who've got the wind up about invasion are the German troops. He says none of them will ever get back alive.'

'Pamela says she'd even finish off the wounded.'

'People talk tough, but when it comes to the point they usually give them a cup of tea.'

'It would serve them right if they gave them English coffee.'

'No, darling. It's not really a booma at all. It's a sort of drooma-drooma.'

'What's the big difference between a booma and a drooma?'

'One's got the guttural "r" in it, darling. So typically German.'

2. GERMAN

'Vot vos dot?'

'Dot vos a bompf.'

'All der time der iss bompfs.'

'Der Fuehrer in his speech haf not said ven Englandt vill invaded be.'

'Der Fuehrer in his speech haf not said ven der var vill over be.'

'Und all der time der iss bompfs.'

'Der shelter gauleiter say dot ve must der little jokes make.'

'Vy must ve der little jokes make?'

'So dot ve in der shelter much laughter haf.'

'I do not any little jokes know.'

'Der iss von dot ask vy must der English Channel der Sherman Army cross?'

'Und vot der reply iss?'

'Dot der Sherman Army must der English Channel cross to der odder side get.'

'Dot very fonny vos. Heil Hitler.'

'Heil Hitler.'

'Vot house vos last night hit?'

'Der house of der gauleiter vos last night hit.'

'Dot also very fonny vos. Heil Hitler.'

'Heil Hitler.'

'Der newspaper Hamburger Frankfurter Beoblaster Zeitung say dot many sacrifices der Sherman people must make.'

'Der Frankfurter Sauerkrauten Bleoblitzen Blut-undgootsenblatt say dot der more sacrifices der Sherman people make der more cheerful der Sherman people must be.'

'Der Hamburger Blitzbleober Blastblitzer Bleoblister Blut-und-gootenblastenblitzenblatt say dot in der shelter der Sherman people must der liddle joke make and der merry game play.'

'Vot vos dot?'

'Dot vos a bompf.'

'Und dot und dot?'

'Dot vos two more bompfs.'

'All der time der iss bompfs.'

'Dere vos a very fonny joke dot ask "vot up goes ven der rain down comes?" '

'Well vot up goes ven der rain down comes?'

'Der umbrella up goes ven der rain down comes.'

'Dot very funny vos. Heil Hitler.'

'Heil Hitler.'

'Und dere vos anodder very fonny joke vich ask vot up goes ven der bompf down comes?'

'Vell, vot up goes ven der bompf down comes?'

'Der vind up goes ven der bompf down comes.'

'Dot also very fonny vos. Heil Hitler.'

'Heil Hitler.'

'Ven iss a door not a door iss?'

'Pliss?'

'I ask ven iss a door not a door iss?'

'Vot vos dot?'

'Dot vos a bompf. But der gauleiter say dot ven der bompfs fall ve must der joke make. So I ask ven iss a door not a door iss?'

'Vell, ven iss a door not a door iss?'

'A door not a door iss ven a door ajar iss.'

'Poddon, but I do not der joke see.'

'If der sense of humour you have not to der gauleiter I report must. Heil Hitler.'

'Heil Hitler. Vot vos dot?'

'Dot vos a bompf.'

'Und dot, und dot?'

'Dot vos more bompfs.'

'All der time dere iss bompfs.'

'Heil Hitler.'

'Heil Hitler.'

LACE FOR THE BRIDE Gerard Hopkins

[To J.]

1



RS. ROMILLY LOOKED up as her son came into the room.

'What a lovely day, darling,' she said smiling above her letters: 'I do hope it will

be like this on the fifteenth.'

Dale returned the smile with a dexterity born of long practice. 'So do I,' he answered and helped himself to coffee.

The February sunlight showed him as still youthful, but with the threat of the forties in the middle distance. Friends were already saying that it was remarkable how young Dale managed to look. He reminded the not-so-friendly of a well-kept London house whose owners feel, regretfully, that next year they will really have to give it a coat of paint.

'Are you in to-night, dear?' his mother asked, with that careful avoidance of expressed curiosity which she called 'leaving Dale perfectly free.'

He heard the overtone and answered it: 'We're going to the ballet——,' and then, with a visible attempt

at difficult propitiation, '—I'd meant to go with you, but, well, I couldn't very well refuse——'

'But of course! You must take me for an old silly if you think I don't understand! We've had lovely times together, but there will be other lovely times for me now that I'm going to have a daughter-in-law. I must get used to doing things alone, you know. I expect I've been spoiled. Perhaps Eileen would come and dine quite quietly one day next week. I realise how busy you must be, but I've become so fond of her, you know, dear, and it's a long time, isn't it, since she was here last?'

'I'm sure she'd love to—things'll be easing up a bit by Wednesday.'

'I shall wait until after the wedding before I start the spring cleaning. That will be something to occupy my mind: but it will seem very odd not having to bother about your room. You've always been so fussy, you know, and I had to be so careful about putting your books back just exactly as they were before.' She paused, as though hoping for an interruption, but he said nothing, and she went on. 'I'm so glad you've settled on the flat. I didn't want to say anything before, because I have a horror of being a tiresome old mother, but I was just a tiny bit worried—you don't mind my saying that now?—you see, it's such a mistake to be overhoused at first. And since you're going to be so lovely and close, I've decided to stay on here. I didn't like to ask your advice, because I knew you had so much to think of, but it has been rather a problem. You see, the house is really too big just for me and the servants. but I am used to it, and I think you may both find it convenient if ever you want to pop in for a meal. Your room will always be ready, you know, darling. Perhaps

you'll come for a night or two sometimes, when Eileen's away?'

'Of course I will, mother.'

'How lovely! that'll give me something to look forward to, won't it? And we'll do a theatre, just as we used to, perhaps: would you like that?'

He smiled at her across his cup. 'You do,' he said,

'arrange things well ahead.'

'I suppose I am rather an old fusser, darling: but, you see, you're all I've got, and these last few years have been so lovely, much more lovely than any mother has a right to expect. Of course they couldn't go on, and I should have been the last person to wish them to. I've always longed for a daughter-in-law, and dear Eileen's so sweet to me. We're going to be most awfully good friends. After all, I shan't live for ever, and I did so want to see you happy and settled, with a home of your own.'

'Heavens!' he said, 'I'd no idea it was so late. I must rush! I'll be back early to dress. See you then, mother.'

She gathered up her letters and followed him into the little hall. When she had helped him on with his overcoat and given it a gentle, and rather ineffective, touch or two with the clothes brush, she permitted herself a slightly more demonstrative kiss then usual.

'Do bring Eileen to dinner next week,' she said: 'there's something rather special I want to give her.'

2

THE EPITHET was, as it turned out, descrived, and Eileen delighted. Her usual poised self-sufficiency

was not proof against the delicious assault of possession, and it was with a little flutter of genuine feeling that she ran across the room and kissed Mrs. Romilly on both cheeks.

'Oh, but it's lovely!' she exclaimed: 'I've never had anything half so nice!'

Dale found the little scene oddly disturbing. He was reminded of the excessive attention displayed by a waiter whom a rich uncle had once, in his presence, grossly over-tipped. The comparison flashed into his mind before he could check it, and he felt rather helplessly horrified at so unexpected a revelation of his latent cynicism. Resolutely, he forced himself to dwell upon his mother's obvious gratification.

'My dear, I'm so glad you like it. I always meant it for Dale's wife. I'm afraid girls don't wear lace much nowadays, but perhaps you can find a use for it on the fifteenth. It was part of my grandmother's weddingdress. Maybe later it will come in for another little ceremony.'

Even the trace of archness in this sentimental forecast failed to diminish Eileen's spontaneous show of pleasure.

'I really feel glad now, for the first time, that I'm going to be married in church,' she said, and turned to her reflection in the mirror that hung above the mantel-piece, festooning the ivory gossamer about her shoulders.

There was something vaguely pathetic about the flush with which the elder woman took the girl's delight. For all that there had never been the slightest overt sign of disagreement in their mutual dealings, the room seemed, on the instant, filled with a sense of that relieved tension which accompanies an amende honorable given and accepted.

Eileen turned, still smiling, still appeased. 'It's really rather a responsibility. How terrible if anything

happened to it.'

'You mustn't feel like that, my dear: it would quite spoil my pleasure if I thought you did. Nothing will, and I do so feel that beautiful things should be used and not be kept locked away in drawers and museums.'

It was Dale who later returned to the subject, since Eileen would not. He seemed almost to be seeking some word of reassurance, though about what, or why, he would have found it impossible to say.

'You did honestly like that shawl?' he queried. They had been at the flat all afternoon, and were snatching a brief respite from the problems of colours, fabrics, and the placing of furniture.

'Why do you ask? Ought I to have said more than

I did?

'Of course not, my pet: you gave terrific satisfaction. I just wanted to know.'

'Whether I meant what I said? Surely you know me well enough to take that for granted?' Feeling, perhaps, that her words had been needlessly brusque, she bent forward and kissed him. 'Don't be an old silly,' she said: 'it's perfectly lovely, and it was sweet of her to give it me.'

He took her smile and enlarged it. 'She asks for so little, you know.'

'I'm not at all sure,' was Eileen's rather unexpected rejoinder, 'that the trouble isn't that she's had so much.'

'Trouble?' He repeated the word as though he found it strange in the context, but she refused to be drawn into an explanation. Instead, she reverted to a previous preoccupation.

'You know, my dear, that sofa really is a bit big for this room—I was afraid it might be,' and so nimbly did she achieve the transition that she made it seem that her mind was moving along a line of progressive logic.

Ruefully he agreed with her. 'I expect you're right,' he said: 'though I hate having to turn it out. I don't believe there's any object of which I have a longer memory. You know--' he went on after a short pause, 'I believe I'm going to get an even greater thrill than you out of this flat. Ever since I was a child I seem to have lived with the same things in the same rooms. We did move, of course, once or twice, but I was still quite young when we came to anchor in Pelham Crescent, and anyhow, the furniture always went with us. I'm glad mother let me have some of it. It makes a connecting link, and I want so terribly to join you up to my past. It's queer how much I resent all the scenes and occasions in which you took no part. I want—' he stopped, searching for the word that would fully express his meaning—'I want my love to be retrospective. Does that sound very sentimental?'

For answer she slipped her arm in his, and he drew strength from the gesture. They sat for a while in silent contentment amidst the confusion of crates and rolled carpets, of stacked chairs and up-ended tables, quiet, it seemed, at the centre of potential life; a new Adam and a new Eve surveying the unawakened elements of Eden. Once she made as though to move, but he stilled her with a touch. 'I think,' he said at last, 'that I shall remember this moment all my life: something ending, something beginning, and creation on tiptoe.'

But with thickening dusk the room's mood changed. Eileen reached for the switch, and the unshaded glare of electricity set them blinking. They moved, and their steps on the uncovered boards set up eddies of restlessness.

'You can have one or two of the pictures, darling, if you like, and some of the chairs, but I must be firm about the sofa.' She lifted one end of it as she spoke, and he was moved to utter a half comical moan of despair.

'Oh, not now!'

But the lust for change was hot in her. 'It won't take a moment if you help,' she said.

'But why not let the men do it? They'll be here to-morrow.'

She made no answer, and with a shrug he prepared to do as she had asked.

Her triumph stopped them, as they returned, upon the threshold.

'There! I knew it would look better with nothing along that wall. And now we can hunt for some really good little piece to fit the corner.' Without moving from the doorway, her eyes still fixed upon imaginary arrangements, she performed one of those curious, those sometimes maddening, tricks of transition, by which she seemed to catch up and fondle irrelevancies as though they had been salient features of a logical argument.

'You ought, you know, to have left your parents long ago, and lived on your own.'

'Perhaps; but how could I? When father died, you see——'

'Of course you could.'

He moved away from the argument and stood for a moment in the uncurtained window, looking into the thin darkness, tracing in fancy the skyline of new roofs, the bosky points of jetty spring between close walls, the valleys of deep shadow, all the pattern of broken sunshine which would form the setting of their shared days. 'I like it here,' he said with a smile, as though mocking his own deliberate understatement, then held his arms wide. She came across to him, and he held her for a while silent and contented. But suddenly she freed herself, not, as he for a moment feared, on an impulse to escape, but seemingly to feel better the satisfaction of their joint imprisonment. For she put her hands upon his shoulders and looked at him fixed so at arms' length, while into the seriousness of her eyes there came a hint of humorous understanding.

'Your mother and I,' she said, 'are going to be very good friends.'

For some reason which he could not tease into its elements he felt himself to be in the position of a defeated general listening to generous terms of armistice. But the sense of vague discomfort was quickly breathed upon and dissipated. He covered her hands with his own, and then, lifting them free, kissed their in-turned palms.

'I'm sure of it,' he murmured.

3

AND so, indeed, it seemed. Never had the three of them moved to a happier measure, and if, for Dale's scrupulous conscience, the cataract of lace masked a little too obviously in its fall the dangerous rocks behind, what matter so that they were masked? The object itself, so frequently displayed, so unstintedly admired, was, after all, a delicate as well as a flaunting symbol, reminding his informed and still occasionally worried

gaze that it stood for subtlety as well as triumph. Not that he had ever willingly admitted the need for subtlety. The situation as he saw it, as he would have wished his wife to see it, was no 'situation' at all, but simply the most normal, the most commonly repeated (in their world) of domestic patterns. Against interference and intrusion his mother was, as he had known she would be, for ever on her guard. The gift had been her one open bid for friendship, and having made the gesture she sat back, and Dale alone knew with how sensitively exposed a surface her heart offered itself to the risk of rebuff. It was Eileen who saw, who, he privately thought, had almost made, the problem.

'I do sometimes wish,' he said on more than one occasion in a burst of wry humour, 'that you had never been to Cambridge and had never heard of modern psychology. It's all so very simple if only you'd see it."

'And who says I don't?'

At the time her retort had left him with a sense of uneasiness, but the blessed shawl had caught that, as so much else, in its voluminous folds, padding it against shock. It was a white flag of peace, and if its colour showed as an emblem of surrender, he could never feel quite certain in his own mind which side it was that had given in. Nor, as time passed, did it seem to matter. At the wedding it had still drawn attention to itself, an object of admiration for the uninstructed, for Dale a cause of troubled uneasiness, since he knew—or thought he knew—how much it meant. Even in the months that followed he felt himself oppressed by its paraded prominence, and wished at times that the swathed and softened easiness which it symbolised could have been brought into their lives without such intervention.

'I really do think that Eileen likes my bit of old lace,'

his mother was moved to say once when they were alone. 'I'm so glad. She looks lovely in it, and it is such a pleasure for me to be able to give her happiness.'

Little by little it ceased to obtrude itself, assuming the position, as became it, of an accepted feature in new domesticities. But there had been one moment, just after the honeymoon, when it showed itself as the occasion of a startling outburst. Eileen, in one of the moods of brittle temper for which his new intimacy with her sex had more or less prepared him, said—'She's for ever watching to see whether I shall have it on,' and swept aside his ill-judged protest: 'Oh yes she is, just as she's watching to see when the baby's coming.' But such uncomfortable moments were few, and the shawl, withdrawn into the shadows of a happy marriage, glimmered there with a mild radiance.

Never had his relations with his mother seemed easier. A wife had done what he had always hoped a wife would do. Mrs. Romilly, happy in the love between them, happier still in the knowledge that in due time it was to give her the new interest for which she had always longed, refrained from making upon him those emotional demands which in the past he had found it so hard to satisfy. She showed herself admirably tactful, touchingly grateful. She went further, and with possibly unsuspected delicacy avoided the mistake of being too touchingly grateful. Eileen's cool common sense and measured, comfortable affection brought contentment as well as love to all their lives. If, gradually, the trappings of Dale's previous existence, the furniture, the pictures, the relics which had accompanied him out of his past, were discreetly removed or replaced; if his wife's sure taste came slowly to dominate the background of their living, he no longer noticed, or, if he did, found now no reason to suspect or to resent. Chairs, cushions, curtains, which he had loved and to which he had clung, vanished by scarcely perceptible degrees, and a new surface grew over his material world like healthy skin grafted over a surgeon's incision.

'I never believed in the possibility of such happiness,' he said: 'I had lived so long in one way that it never seriously occurred to me that I could live in any other. Any change would have seemed to me then a mere interlude, and now'—he took her hand and played with the fingers—'now it's this that seems the permanency, all else a dream.'

She freed her hand to reach for a basket of darning, and he sighed, but not plaintively. He had come to accept (and secretly to relish) even her occasional spasms of resistance to his sentiment. 'I suppose,' he concluded, 'I grew up late.' She patted his knee.

'Better late than never,' she said.

4

IT PROCEEDED, that kind of remark, from a dryness in her which he was coming more and more to recognise and welcome. At first he had feared that to his mother it might seem but the expression of a hard competence, but there, it seemed, he was wrong. Unexpectedly, she was at ease with it. If both women were masterful, they expressed their temperaments in very different ways, and a mutual respect had apparently banished the risk of mutual hostility.

To such an extent had he already grown to rely

upon Eileen's cool control of emotion, that he was uncomfortably surprised by the effect on her of advancing pregnancy. She showed a fretfulness that was new and disturbing, a tendency to savage outbursts of apparently unprovoked temper. There were even instances of a physical violence so extreme that only responsive violence, deliberate and controlled, could have mastered them, and these he lacked the temperament, though not the understanding, to produce. In gentleness he withdrew, with tolerance he sought to palliate, learning, perhaps too easily, that the fits would pass, and hoping that with time the cause might vanish.

Returning home one dark November evening, he became aware of a smell of singeing in the flat, and felt, as soon as he opened the front door, a black, oppressive silence. In the living-room an electric iron lay on the floor amidst the wreckage of a standing lamp to which its flex had been attached. A china bowl had toppled and lay in fragments. General untidiness bore witness to casual violence.

'Eileen,' he called, keeping his voice midway between solicitude and irritation.

There was no answer.

Perhaps she was out, but he thought it unlikely. Carefully maintaining the ordinary noises of return, he moved about the tiny hallway, until, at last, having exhausted every pretext for dallying, he opened the closed bedroom door, and found her lying wide-eyed under the spotlight of her bedside lamp. She uttered no word of welcome, gave scarcely a sign of recognition. The mood was on her that he had learned to dread. Silently he laid the evening paper on the pillow, and turned to leave her. Her voice stopped him on the threshold.

'I've burned the damned thing,' she said, so tonelessly that the adjective took on a queer horror of detachment.

His silence might have been incomprehension, but she assumed otherwise. He was ready for sympathy, but feared resentment should he offer it.

'Not on purpose,' she went on through his silence, and on the same note.

'Why, darling, of course not.'

He spoke hurriedly, as though anxious to say something, anything, to forestall words that she might afterwards regret. But she withdrew into a silence against which he could do nothing, and it was not until later that he heard the full story of her unfortunate, her unimportant, accident.

'Yes,' he was for ever repeating during the days

that followed, 'unimportant, my sweet.'

But she refused that comfort, seeming to find in her sense of doom a strange and aggressive comfort.

'It's the kind of thing that might have happened to anybody,' he argued. 'I'm sure something of the kind must often have happened to mother. She'd be the last person not to understand. Tell her, and see. She'll be sorry, naturally, and all that, because she was so glad you liked it, but she won't mind.'

The idea, however, that nothing must be said—at least not yet—became, with Eileen, a troublesome obsession. He must promise her not to mention the miserable business. It would be impossible to explain; it would be too awful. It made him angry, at last, this obdurate refusal to take the natural course.

'What on earth are you frightened of, silly?' he asked more than once with attempted lightness. 'She'd say nothing that wasn't understanding: surely you realise that?'

She admitted that, but still would not change her attitude. 'But it makes it all so much more difficult to say nothing,' he protested. 'She's bound to find out in the long run, and how on earth are you going to explain then?'

The thought that his wife was afraid of the small, necessary confession hurt as much as it surprised him. It seemed to imply a dread of his mother which the elder woman had done nothing to deserve. Surely she had earned the compliment of frankness? Almost the worst feature of the whole trivial and silly business for him was the knowledge that, for the first time, he could not grasp Eileen's obscure and difficult motive. He harped so continuously, so helpfully, on the one string that finally the resistance of her increasing nervousness broke under a strain that he had never intended.

'But don't you see,' she cried, 'that it's just that: just her being so understanding day after day. Sometimes I could shriek!'

'No, I don't,' he retorted, and dropped the subject.

With some vague idea of paving the way for future explanations, he confessed to his mother a general uneasiness.

'She's been getting into such states,' he said, 'that sometimes I'm quite worried. Dr. Peters says everything's going splendidly: but her nerves seem all to pieces.'

'Don't worry, darling,' his mother replied with her gentlest smile. 'I don't think men can ever realise quite what a woman feels like at such times. It'll all mend itself when the baby comes. I know.'

And, to a certain extent, even before it had come,

the baby was helpful. It forced Eileen into a routine of quiet domesticity which served, at least, to disguise the absence of the shawl. It was an adornment which she had worn only for very special occasions, and in their absence it could hardly be missed.

The respite, however, was only temporary, and it was Mrs. Romilly who, quite unconsciously, was responsible for shattering the quiet interlude. She had been asked to tea, and all had gone admirably. There had been an amicable discussion of names for children of either sex; plans had been mooted and agreed upon; no hint of tension had marred the day. Eileen, in her best of moods, had smiled and made small concessions gracefully. Mrs. Romilly had kept grandmotherly enthusiasm within decent bounds. And then, as she got up to go, she had made a suggestion.

'I thought that if you liked,' she said, smiling down at her daughter-in-law, 'I'd have that shawl made into a christening robe. You were married in it, my dear, and I'm sentimental enough to want to see it on your

first child.'

Blandly he had attempted a rescue.

'Oh, but that would ruin it, mother; and it's so lovely.'

The smile was eloquent now of feminine complicity.

'Men don't understand these things, do they? It needn't be cut at all. Miss Emberlin is coming to do some work for me next week, and she's so clever. I'm sure she'll be able to suggest something.'

But Eileen scorned to manœuvre.

'Dale and I,' she said, 'haven't decided whether we're going to have it christened at all.'

There was an awkward pause. Then, in a tone eloquent of injured susceptibilities bravely born, Mrs. Romilly delivered her parting shot.

'Oh well, my dear, of course you must decide that between you.'

5

IF A sense of hurt feelings had hung about her retreating figure like petrol fumes behind a passing car. it thickened, during the next few days, into a fog of misunderstanding. Dale saw only too clearly the hopelessness of pointing out that the words had been impulsively spoken. However unpremeditated they might be made to appear, they still would have had to be explained, and explanation was impossible. An envelope in his mother's handwriting next morning bore witness to the depth of her wound. He had long ago learned to dislike her letters. Except when he was away from her, they had always been the emissaries of bruised affection, for she had ever held the curious belief that written reproaches could be more easily digested and forgotten than spoken criticism, and it was fully understood between them that all such communications should remain unanswered. But this time there could be no help in silence. It wasn't, she wrote, that she minded. But it was all so unexpected. After all, they had been married in church, and she had always supposed-she was old fashioned, of course, and it was foolish to be hurt—that church had meant something to both of them. Still, a thing like that was for them to decide. They must do what they thought best. But she was

older, and she had always hoped they were going to have no secrets from her. And was it quite fair on the child? She wouldn't have said anything if it wasn't for the fact that they were all she had. She wanted everything to be so happy.

And that, too obviously, was what, at the moment, everything wasn't. At best there was momentary relief—Miss Emberlin came, sewed and departed, without further mention of the shawl—but at a high price of frayed nerves.

'If only,' Dale moaned, 'you had let me tell her about the accident when I asked you to, nothing of this

would ever have happened.'

But it was too late now to mend that mistake, and to dwell on it merely added to the already high total of their discomforts. Maternal argument might have been hard to bear, but maternal silence was an intolerable substitute. The rectitude of non-intervention made itself felt in the very air they breathed. Eileen became pale and drawn and unpleasantly shrill. With a fine display of selflessness, Mrs. Romilly let it be seen—a little too clearly—that so far as she was concerned all was forgiven and forgotten. She left flowers and books; she came to tea—when she was asked, but each invitation loomed now as a difficulty, if only as a difficulty overcome. 'And all,' he reflected bitterly, 'because Eileen had an accident with an electric iron!' It was too ridiculous; it was too uncomfortable.

Fortunately the weather became hot and London stuffy. In an access of despairing activity he took matters into his own hands and a Berkshire cottage on short lease. Eileen was surprisingly docile and appreciative, his mother, when told, almost unbearably understanding. She even refrained from pointing out that

she had been told nothing of the impending move until it was almost an accomplished fact.

'So wise of you both,' she commented. 'It will be lovely for the dear child to be born in the middle of such beauty and peace.' To Dale, when next they were private, she added,—'and I expect I shall see just as much of you as ever, darling: whenever you want a bed for a night, you know you've only got to say.' Nor was this projected arrangement as unwelcome to Eileen as he had feared it might be. Rather hesitatingly he said that he supposed he ought to spend one night a week in Pelham Crescent. 'I don't really want to, but for a time, at least, I think it would be only fair': -and her 'Of course you must' had left him surprised as well as relieved. Eileen had even gone so far as to say that his mother must come to the cottage whenever she felt like it, but except for a visit of introduction and admiration ('such a lovely view: it makes me very happy to think of you both in all this quiet beauty'), this clause became rarely operative. Somehow the one spare room seemed always difficult to apportion between friends and relatives, and very soon, of course, it would have to be turned into a nursery. But, for the time being at least, Berkshire brought peace in more ways than one. If Eileen, moving from South Kensington, had produced on Dale the rather unwelcome impression of flight-not into Egypt, but quite definitely into the Thames Valley —her contented installation did something to clear the air. All was peace. The summer was hot, the cottage cool. Country life proved unexpectedly entertaining, and Mrs. Romilly remained happy in the anticipation (and recurring regret) of her little weekly festivals. So satisfactory from all points of view did the arrangement seem that when, at Eileen's suggestion, the landlord

was asked whether he would sell the small property, there was scarcely a suggestion of disappointment in Pelham Crescent. 'Perhaps it was just as well that I did renew the lease after all,' said Mrs. Romilly; 'though I did it, of course, to be near you,' she added. 'I think I see more of you like this than when you were at the flat. I'll have the large bedroom furnished again and then you can use the house as a London pied-à-terre. You won't have to bother about me at all: we shall be quite independent.'

Towards the end of June the child was born, and in due course its grandmother journeyed into Berkshire with a box-load of woollen garments. But between these two events a strange thing occurred: the child was christened. Quite quietly, without preliminary announcement, it made the short trip to the village font and back. Since neither Dale nor his wife held strong orthodox views, the proceeding seemed scarcely necessary. But there was something obstinate in Eileen's insistence. It was as though she were trying to say-'well, at least she can't hold that against me,' and her impatience was provoked when in the course of mild argument he remarked—'it makes another secret, and that's so awkward.' But that, unfortunately, was what it failed to do, for when Mrs. Romilly achieved her pilgrimage of adoration, the small and talkative country girl who was temporarily acting as nurse-maid made it quite clear, by her prattle of how her charge had or had not cried in the Parson's face, what had happened.

She would have been surprised to learn that it was

spent the night in London.

Nothing was said at the time, but from then on it became clear that Eileen wondered, if she did not ask, precisely what her husband and his mother talked about when he not of christenings or of the foolishness of having family secrets. There were, by this time, other subjects. The cottage had been bought, and there was a plan for extension. To each of his visits Dale went armed with architect's drawings and contractor's estimates. At first with a not altogether unnatural reserve, later with genuine interest, his mother began to discuss details of plumbing and accommodation, and when, at last, she made an insistent offer of monetary help, he realised with a sense of lightness about his heart that relations were returning to an older, easier level.

'It's such happiness for her to feel that she's helping,' he reported in Berkshire, and, to his wife's mild protest that, with what Mrs. Romilly was proposing to do for them, the house would be very much more elaborate than they had ever intended, he objected that they couldn't, no just couldn't after what had happened, refuse. She said no more, and when, surrounded by newly dug trenches, they began to live in the subtly exciting smell of turned earth, brick dust and new plaster, she was inclined, he thought, to agree. Indeed, she showed an excited interest, to an extent he had never anticipated, in the whole business of improvement, displaying unexpected genius in matters of adaptation and invention. Nothing would induce her to leave the place, for all the noise and discomfort of upheaval. It was as though she were living dangerously on the edge of some dissolution, and was bending every effort to achieve perfection in her memorial. Only in late autumn, when the new roof was on, the new terrace banked, the two extra bathrooms completed, and the plaster ready for the slow process of drying, did she consent to take her son on a prolonged visit to an aunt in Scotland, so that she might have a long rest and so

strengthen herself for the ordeal of settling in again at Christmas.

When he saw her off at Euston, Dale felt that the new chapter which was to be opened in two months' time might well prove to be the beginning of their married life.

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THE LAST sentence of her letter, with its air of quiet detachment, seemed to him more wounding than anything that had gone before.

'. . . It is probably a good thing your mother had all that work done. It will make it easier for you to get rid of the house. . . .'

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MRS. ROMILLY locked up as her son came into the room. The February sunlight was making a pretence of spring, and the bulbs standing in their bowls of Italian earthenware showed spots of bright colour at the roots of spiky leaves.

'Are you in to-night, dear?' she asked, with that careful avoidance of expressed curiosity which she called 'leaving Dale perfectly free.'

'No, but I shan't be late.'

He poured out his coffee and looked through his letters.

'It's so lovely to think that the good weather will

soon be here,' she said with desperate cheerfulness. 'I shall really have to be thinking about the spring-cleaning soon,' and then, as he still made no response, 'it'll be quite like the old days; you were always so fussy about having your books put back exactly as they were before.'

So like, he thought with sudden forlorn bitterness, that he could almost imagine her saying (as he knew she was thinking)—'almost as though you'd never been away.'

He looked at his watch. 'Heavens!' he exclaimed, 'I'd no idea it was so late.'

She followed him into the hall, helped him on with his overcoat, and gave it a gentle and rather ineffective touch or two with the clothes brush.

'Perhaps,' he said, 'I'd better go away for a week or ten days. That'll give you a chance of having the place properly turned out.'

She was unexpectedly acquiescent: 'Well, dear,' she said, 'it would do you no harm to have a change, and really this year I think we must give the outside of the house a coat of paint.'

THE PIGEON FANCIER

Leonard Russell



THOUT A DOUBT the lives led by those four people would have greatly displeased enlightened persons. There they were, father, mother, son and daughter, existing obscurely

in the confusion of shops, houses, factories, railways, canals called south-east London. Daily they trampled on the ideals of sociologists, scientists and other progressive people. They gambled on pigeon-races and football pools as if no economic or moral issues were involved. They consumed extravagant quantities of the wrong foods as if enjoyment were all and diet-research a mere amiable pastime, like orchid cultivation. Yes, these were dark and unenlightened lives.

Strange, therefore, that the Smith family impenitently relished its everyday existence; strange that despite its imperfections it remained persuaded of the fullness and richness of life. And those four people went even further. They cherished the odd notion that they were not as other families; that delicious touches in their personalities and circumstances distinguished them from a commonplace world without.

There was, for example, the little matter of the hat. It was nothing, nothing at all. They didn't expect outsiders to see the point of it. All the same, they were

not displeased with the trifling affair of the hat. It was that for a year now George Smith, the father, had worn a cloth cap indoors without having any particular reason for so doing. He wasn't susceptible to colds in the head, nor was he hiding a scalp affliction from the eyes of the curious. No, it had become his pleasure to wear a hat indoors and wear it he did, as one entirely unconscious of trespass against nice behaviour. That was all. Yet for some reason the spectacle of his covered head pleased the rest of them. They told themselves that the thing was impossible in any house but their own. They related with satisfaction that wives had left their husbands for less. Liberty Hall, said Harry, the son—why should I go and get married when I live in Liberty Hall?

MR. SMITH owned a little sweet and tobacco shop, and Mrs. Smith and Mary served in it. Mr. Smith couldn't help them very much because the loft of racing pigeons which he had established in the



backyard kept him fully occupied. Harry worked in a

garage round the corner.

One summer evening in 1936, as the Town Hall clock was striking ten, Harry admitted himself into the shadows of the closed shop, where the lights from the street gleamed on the shining metal lids and the glassiness of the sweet-jars displayed on the walls. When he opened the shop-parlour door the first thing he noticed was that his father, sitting at the table, wore his hat with a difference to-night; the next, that he held a slate-blue pigeon to his waistcoat. Mr. Smith's cap was pushed back off his forehead with the peak pointing ceilingwards; so are caps worn when their wearers are touched with wonder or despair. Mr. Smith, however, was not touched with despair: he was bathed, drowned, destroyed in it. And the object of his despair was the slate-blue pigeon with the green sheen on its breast.

The bird lay still but tense in his hands: as still and tense as the field-mouse below the hovering hawk. One of its round, inexpressive eyes seemed to stare at a grocer's calendar on the wall as Mr. Smith bent over its outspread wing. Easy to see that he held the pigeon in the manner of the expert. Its legs were gripped between two fingers of his left hand so that the long-clawed feet, though they twitched slightly, could do no damage. The beak and rough white wattles were directed to the table-top, the tail-feathers brushed his chin. The bird quivered and was still again. Mr. Smith continued to brood.

Harry said not a word as he took off his oily jacket. While he untied his shoes he glanced cautiously at his mother, who was sitting by the fire-place in a Windsor chair, her slippered feet resting on an iron fender which had 'Home Sweet Home' in large letters stamped out of

its middle. For a moment or two she regarded him steadily round the edge of a newspaper. Harry looked back inquiringly. She responded by nodding towards her husband and miming profound gloom. The thin shoulders in the flowered overall slumped in exaggerated dejection. The dark-lidded eyes closed as she swayed her head from side to side in a movement which agitated her carelessly piled and greying hair. Harry nodded comprehendingly. The old man was upset. He mustn't start an argument or anything with him. Indifferent to this pantomime, unaware of it doubtless, Mr. Smith continued to contemplate that unfortunate bird.

Presently he looked up, nodded to Harry without enthusiasm, and addressed the room. His speech was of cats. 'Drown 'em,' he proposed, 'drown 'em all! People talk about the mischief done by rabbits. Rabbits! Why, cats do twice the damage—yes, madam, twice the damage.' This last fierce observation was addressed to Mary, whom he suspected, very justly, of an heretical desire to own a cat. The long, mournful, rather beautiful face of the girl remained placid. Calmly and silently she continued with her task of engrafting blue wool on to a roll of rug-canvas resting across her knees.

Mr. Smith spoke again. 'Mark my words, though, the day'll come when cats are licensed same as dogs. See if pigeon-fanciers don't get that passed one day. Not sure it isn't on foot already——' He hesitated as there floated into his mind a vision of austere legislators in top hats. 'Deputation . . . Chancellor of the Exchequer . . . he knows all about the ravages of the cat.' For a second his last few words were as balm poured into the bleeding heart of the unhappy. 'The ravages of the cat!' he repeated, delighted by his

invention. With a gesture of annoyance he returned to the pigeon once more.

'That the blue chequer?' inquired Harry warily.

Mr. Smith grunted.

'What's the cat done to her?' persevered Harry.

Conflicting emotions passed across the broad, flat face of Mr. Smith, who in his more cheerful moments suggested facially a rugged Mr. Pickwick. He was conscious of a strong desire to relate his misfortune to his son. But he could not. Not yet. He grunted again.

Harry, who knew him too well to say more at this stage, stood up, stamped his feet into his felt slippers, and turned to his mother, grumbling that supper was late. Instantly Mrs. Smith, uttering self-reproachful sounds, flung down her paper and sprang up. She was guilty—as guilty as Mrs. Maybrick. The males of the house stood appealing for sustenance while she sat superbly idle.

'Supper, supper, supper,' she cried, looking from Harry to the table. But it was a doubtful look, for Mr. Smith was resolutely in possession of the table. Its not very extensive surface, protected with sheets of newspaper, supported his elbows and a stout wooden box with a small clock face let into one of its sides. It was the automatic timing-clock indispensable to the sport of pigeon-racing.

Mrs. Smith coughed. 'If you've all done with the table,' she hinted.

But Mr. Smith made no reply.

'Quite finished with the table, George?'

'I have done with the table,' he pronounced weightily. He had cut it off with a shilling.

Without loss of a second the two women jumped into

activity, stripping the paper from it, carefully transferring the clock to the mantelpiece, seeking cups, saucers, spoons, knives. There was about these researches a certain informality. From the lid of the battered old piano, for example, Mrs. Smith whisked various articles not popularly associated with that instrument, among them a linen tablecloth, a tea cosy, and a milk jug. The truth was that you could get practically anything from the Smiths' piano except music: items of everyday domesticity like clean pillow slips and tablecloths, introductions to culture and aids to the enlargement of the mind like Pears' Encyclopædia and Nuttall's Dictionary, half-knitted woollen garments in green paper bags, or a bowl of ancient nuts and last week's copy of the Racing Pigeon.

Eagerly Mary seized the tablecloth and ballooned it over the table, twitching it this way and that as it descended. At the opposite end her mother darted to smooth and worry it into regularity. With swift and practised movements they began to lay the supper.

On Mr. Smith, who had retreated to the hearthrug with the pigeon still in his hands, the effect of this simple piece of domestic routine was soothing. The clash of shining spoons, the deftness of the women as they played plates and saucers on to the table like cards were sights and sounds peculiarly comforting. He looked at Harry, now leaning back in the Windsor chair, and cleared his throat.

'A bit hard,' he murmured, 'a bit hard. Here was the blue chequer working up well week after week—sixth place a couple o' Saturdays ago, fourth in last week's race and only beaten a whistle. Then what goes and happens when she's properly fit? Why, a cat—that

great tom-cat from down the road—has a go at her this afternoon.'

'On the roof of the house?' asked Harry.

'On the loft. The tom landed bang on the loft beside the chequer with its damn great tail fluffed up like a flue brush. Didn't know where I was for a second. Threw my cap at the tom—ears standing out like horns they were. Like horns.' And he described again the cat's attack on the pigeon in greater detail and with flourishes of what might be called folk poetry.

'What's the damage?' inquired Harry, with a look which blended sympathy and indignation. 'Not so bad as you thought?'

'Hurt her wing—can't race her this week anyways. Might have been worse.'

'She be all right for the Banff race?'

'Think so,' grunted Mr. Smith. 'But luck, talk about luck! For two pins I'd chuck up racing altogether—chuck it right up. It's enough to make a man.'

There is money to be won in the democratic sport of pigeon-racing, but for Mr. Smith, even though he probably didn't realise it, money was a secondary attraction. The truth was, he brought an artist's passion to the pastime. Pigeons were the agent which intensified his life, brought grandeur and misery to his temperamental soul. Now, in his bitterness, he was execrating the object of his passion. 'It's enough to make a man,' he repeated sternly.

Mrs. Smith begged him not to take his reverses to heart. Harry made sounds of sympathy. Mary hazarded a little encouragement.

'You know, dad,' she murmured, sawing away with the bread-knife, 'I've a feeling you may get a surprise one of these days.' 'What you mean, a surprise?'

She turned to face him. 'I mean something unexpected may turn up.'

'What you mean, something unexpected?'

'Well—I don't know—I somehow feel the barren hen will win a race. Is that silly?'

She smiled gently, and the shadow of melancholy disappeared from her face. She was thinking of that bird of remarkable character with the curious name, the bird who was always, or so it seemed to her, misjudged.

'The barren hen!' Disgust and contempt were in Mr. Smith's voice. Ah, that rogue pigeon! Ah, that bird who might have won a dozen races did she not carry within her a black and unredeemable soul! He could see her in his mind's eye now, squatting up on the roof of the house, resisting every blandishment to descend on to the pigeon loft and thence into the trap, where his trembling fingers were waiting to snatch the red rubber ring from her leg. You couldn't win a race without that red ring. You couldn't be anywhere in a race unless you tore that ring from the bird's leg, jammed it in a little tin box the size of an Oxo cube, then dropped the little tin box into the clock which registered the time of the bird's arrival. The barren hen! How many times had she not arrived in wonderful time, from places hundreds of miles away, then calmly perched herself on the slates, devilishly immune to all entreaty, infuriatingly oblivious of all her obligations to the one who fed her and tended her and rested his highest aspirations upon her.

Unhappily Mary had not a perfect understanding of all the notorious circumstances. To her the barren hen was the pigeon who in some way had acquired a legendary character.

'Something unexpected!' said Mr. Smith bitterly;

and in his indignation he gripped the blue chequer's legs tightly between his fingers. The pigeon protested jerkily. He stared down at her, and all the storm and disappointment in his soul, now mounted to his eyes, fell torrentially on the slate-blue bird with the green sheen on its breast. Blowing heavily, he pushed towards the door, and when he reached it he directed an angry word at his daughter: 'One day something unexpected will happen to your barren hen, my girl. One day, I shouldn't be surprised'—and he flourished his fingers in the motion of turning on a tap—'somebody will wring that pigeon's neck!' And nursing the blue chequer to his bosom, he made off down the passage to the yard.

'Tender-hearted old chicken, that's what he is,' remarked Mrs. Smith lightly when the echoing footfalls on the stone passage had ceased. 'Mary, I think we'll have the cheese.'

'He wouldn't hurt a fly,' said Mary, untouched by contrition. 'He couldn't wring a pigeon's neck, everyone knows that.'

They smiled at their rich impudence in treating thus coolly the vagaries of the master of the house.

'The old scratch,' murmured Harry. 'The state he gets into—and there's that Banff race coming along.'

It was a yearly trial for them all, the race for the Banff cup. They groaned and shook their heads. The old man didn't stand a chance, even though he had once got third prize in the event. No doubt about it, the other local fanciers were too clever for the old scratch. Thirty years at the game, and what had he got from it? A few diplomas every season, a few pounds from the pools and winners' awards, an umbrella with a silver band won in the show-pen—nothing, really; none of the big prizes of the pigeon fancier's world.

'Ss-hh!' said Mrs. Smith. They composed themselves to treat him with the respect due to the sage whose bird took third place in that remarkable race from Banff.

IT WAS early-closing day and the shop was shut. The Smiths had just disposed of six o'clock tea. Harry was at work.

'Progress,' muttered Mr. Smith. 'The things they get up to nowadays!' Ostensibly it was the beginning of a fireside reverie, actually it was an urgent call for the attention of his wife.

She glanced interrogatively over the top of the evening paper. 'George?'

'It's a dumber!' he exclaimed, and tapped the Racing Pigeon on his knee as he brooded. 'Suppose,' he went on, with a certain disregard of congruity, 'that you're an Air Force pilot—your plane's riddled with shot, your wireless been carried away, you may come down in enemy country in half a tick. Get that? Now imagine as well you've valuable information in your possession about the enemy's troops. How would you get that information to headquarters?'

Mrs. Smith touched her forehead in a pretence of earnest consideration.

'Keep it up,' said Mr. Smith vigorously, 'and while you're thinking we'll test those large brain-boxes that youngsters are supposed to have nowadays. Mary, now, what do you think the pilot would do?'

But Mary's absorption in a book was such that the problem had to be repeated. Then her sad, serious glance was fixed unwaveringly on her father as she

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replied: 'He would release a pigeon with a message tied to its leg.'

'So he would, would he?' said Mr. Smith gibingly, as if victory was his. Then with a childishly rueful air, 'You must have noticed me reading about it just now.'

'I did not,' said Mary, and returned abruptly to her book.

'Very, very smart, madam,' he murmured, with a side-glance at his wife. Pride and wonder were in that look. 'The cleverness of the chit,' he seemed to say. 'We have bred a daughter of remarkable accomplishments.'

He stood up. 'Well, I must toddle off to the club now—we're making arrangements for the Banff race to-night. Where's my brown shoes?' He was wearing what he called his half-holiday clothes, muffler, green sweater, sports coat, grey flannel trousers flecked with paint and whitewash from the pigeon loft, old tennis shoes, and he gave the impression of something between a gentleman farmer and one of the seconds at a boxing match.

The brown shoes were discovered, somewhat crushed, under the treadle of the sewing-machine. But he was too elated by the business on hand to bother about this negligent treatment of his cherished belongings.

'Back before ten, mother,' he called from the door.
'You be here, Mary?'

'Yes, dad.'

'Good! Got booking to do—you know, the Banff entries.'

When he did return he was even more elated.

'Where's that secretary of mine?' he cried as he bustled into the room. 'Where is she, the best handwriter I ever seen? 'Evening, Harry.'

Mary wrinkled her brows ironically at this heavy playfulness.

'Waiting for me, is she?' he went on. 'Mother, your daughter there could get a job as a secretary any day—the references I'd give her! 'Course, we rort away at each other now and again, but that's just a bit of high-spirited fun as they say. Ain't that so, Mary my girl?'

She affected boredom, but traces of gratification were imperfectly concealed as she asked coldly, 'What must I do?'

'I'm sending five to Banff—five fighting fit pigeons, as I live. Make out the entry form, check their numbers—you know.' From his hip pocket he drew a long piece of tape on which were threaded aluminium rings, embossed with letters and numbers, destined for the legs of fledgling pigeons. 'Yes, and you might put down the numbers of these rings. Carefully, mind. No mistakes!'

Mary gleefully and unexpectedly snatched the tinkling tape from his fingers. 'My pearls!' she cried as she irreverently looped it round her throat. Then, as he protested, 'All right, all right, I shan't hurt the old rings. Forgot they were made of platinum.'

A tiff already! He grumbled, 'Now if you're not going to be serious,' and took up his stud-book with a dignified air. Soon, however, Mary was at work to his satisfaction; as he peeped over her shoulder he exclaimed at the beauty of her handwriting, reflected that education was a wonderful thing, and praised her general diligence.

Presently approval of the same high order was extended to his son. 'About the pools for the Banff race, old chap,' he began, and his manner elevated the twenty-year-old Harry to full male status.

'What about the pools?' said Harry sharply. He had burnt his fingers on a hot exhaust pipe that evening.

'I was wondering. Now would you like to put all

five birds in the ten shilling pools?'

'Two pound ten!' cried Harry. 'Am I made of

money?'

'It's an opportunity,' Mr. Smith reminded him sagely. 'I might almost say it's a snip. Speculate to accumulate, you know.'

'You speculate then,' said Harry nastily.

'All right, my boy, I will. You'll be sorry. And I tell you another thing I'll do—I'll put the barren hen in the race. I'll put the barren hen in the race for Mary. She's a smart kid and a wonderful handwriter, and she's got a sort of feeling for the barren hen. That's right—I'll send a round half-dozen birds, and I'll put the barren hen in the thripenny, sixpenny and shilling pools for Mary. Hear that, Mary?'

'Dad! You make me feel nervous. Don't put her

in the pools for goodness' sake!'

'Never you mind, my girl. You leave it to me. I'll make Harry gnash those ugly teeth of his before I've done with the Banff race—ha! ha! ha!'

'Throwing away your money,' said Harry bitterly. 'You couldn't win the Banff cup if you tried a hundred years.'

'Couldn't I?' He was possessed by a large excitement. 'Let me tell you,' he boasted, 'that it's as good as on the piano already, that cup is.'

This enraged Harry. 'You haven't got the brains to be successful at pigeon-racing,' he cried, his wild fair hair bristling. 'If only you'd listen to me and get some new stock in that loft out there! Scrap the present lot, sell 'em for catsmeat, and——'

'Scrap the red chequer! Scrap Old Reliable and the pied after all the winners I've bred from 'em! Not me! You don't know how stoopid you make yourself with all this ridiculous talk.'

They began to thunder away, heedless of domestic propriety and what the neighbours would think, using every dodge of the family circle debating technique. This technique, known and loved in the homes of Great Britain for generations, involves the use of the deepest notes in the male larynx and a most tenacious hold on one or two simple intellectual judgments. These are detonated at intervals of five seconds or so, and provided the debater does not allow himself to be drawn into employing more varied and therefore less effective ammunition, cannot fail to produce good results. Harry's utterance in the discussion concerned almost exclusively the obstinacy of the old; his father's the callow absurdity of the young. 'Nothing in your brain except water,' cried Harry repeatedly. 'Have a bit of common,' adjured Mr. Smith at short intervals. 'What were you given a head for?' When Mrs. Smith intervened with the interesting suggestion that they should listen to the music on the wireless, they waved her away sternly. But she persisted, and addressed them with vivacity upon the beneficial influences of music. Soon they were like boxers hampered by the presence of the referee between them, and rapidly the debate lost its robust character.

At supper, however, more trouble. First a wind of discontent and irritation blew strongly over the table when a mishap occurred in the sacred rite of teamaking.

Portions of smoked haddock, strangely reminiscent of slices of pineapple, were served to the two men. But

Mr. Smith did not eat. He took up his knife and fork and waited. It seemed to him that after all these years the significance of his action should have been recognised. It seemed to him that the women were reprehensibly careless in overlooking his well-known preference for tea before food. But no! Mary sat before a morsel of Dutch cheese and began to eat it with the utmost self-possession. Mrs. Smith tapped her chest thrice, muttered 'Indigestion,' and helped herself to bread and butter. At last he rapped on the table with the butt of his knife. 'Food,' he said warmly, 'is nothing to me—never has been. Beer's nothing to me. But that's not to say I don't like my cup of tea.'

'George!' exclaimed Mrs. Smith, rising hastily. 'Don't say I've forgotten to pour out.' The offence, obviously, was grave: it really was a bit thick, her expression averred, to be served with food but no drink. With an anxious watch on the liquid cascading from the pot, she said smoothly, 'Nice and strong, George.'

Strong! He dashed the cup angrily from his lips. 'But it's weak—weaker than water! And you said it

was strong!'

She looked humble and began to stir furiously in the pot, while Harry smiled broadly at her artful assumption of humility and her optimistic remark about the strength of the tea. Mary, however, did not laugh: she grew angry. She was fully aware that tea-making was a legitimate occasion for displays of parental passion, she was willing to recognise its importance in the daily ritual of the household. But to-night her father's accusing 'And you said it was strong!' disgusted her. Her eyes gleamed.

'What a fuss!' she commented icily. Then, as if this intervention failed to present her parent with a con-

siderable enough portion of her mind, 'The things one hears in this house!'

An inflammatory speech, practically a revolutionary speech. Silence! Mrs. Smith assumed a non-committal expression intended to serve as an appeal for order and seemliness. Mr. Smith nursed his bruised dignity and affected to study a scratch on the toecap of his shoe. And Mary, her blow for free speech made, lowered her head. So they sat, this family group, round a rent supper table. A minute or two passed. Then an unusual thing happened. The shop-door bell rang—once, twice, thrice.

Friends? They shrank from the possibility.

Illness? The police?

'At this time o' night!' cried Mr. Smith, glancing from one face to another. Something in his look purged the room of discord, restored harmony to their relations.

'If it's friends,' said Mary boldly, 'we've gone to bed.'

'I never was one for company,' lamented Mrs. Smith.

'Let 'em ring it out,' commanded the head of the house.

They listened anxiously, as if midnight shout and revelry clamoured on the threshold. In a moment the bell rang again.

'I wonder?' said Mr. Smith. A long pause, then, 'Hadn't somebody better answer that door?'; and he settled more firmly in his chair and looked at Harry. By now Mrs. Smith and Mary were exchanging apprehensive glances—they knew, they knew! Who could doubt that out there, beneath an angry sky, like strong winds eager to drive through the house, were those feared visitors, Auntie Williams and her wicker hamper

-come, no doubt, for a long stay. Well—the men must

face her for they could not.

Harry went to the door to find a porter from the station impatiently waiting. 'Here,' he croaked surlily, 'you'd better take this in-right address you'll find. Can't leave the animal in the parcels office all night.' And he held out a basket.

Taking hold of it gingerly, Harry found that it communicated a peculiar springiness, a kind of tension, to his arm. He retreated from the door to the shop parlour, basket in hand, and hurriedly deposited his burden on the black and white linoleum. Three pairs of eyes stared at it.

'What's this?' asked Mrs. Smith pallidly.

'It's an animal,' said Harry. 'A cat, I should say.'

Mr. Smith looked at the basket as if it were a fragment of bomb which had plunged through the ceiling; his eyes widened hypnotically as Harry snatched the long wooden pin from the basket's lid, looked inside, and threw back the lid.

'What you doing!' roared Mr. Smith, jumping to his feet.

Too late! Out jumped a cat whose coat was the colour of trodden snow, whose eyes were as blue as the Mediterranean, whose black mask was fox-like in its triangularity. Alarmed cries from the women, a violent shooing noise from Mr. Smith.

'George! Don't!' cried his wife.

The orbs, cold as glass marbles, of the Siamese cat turned from Mr. Smith to a sanctuary beneath the piano. It crawled on its belly like the serpent towards this refuge—slowly, slowly. Then, 'Puss, nice pussie,' called Mrs. Smith.

A snarling hiss, a deep growl which sent a tremor

through its belly, a mad rocketing rush out of the door, along the passage, into the scullery. There it hesitated, leapt on to the gas stove, scrambled thence to a shelf near the ceiling, and took cover behind a saucepan. Prinny the cat had come in like a lion.

'YES, GEORGE, that's old Mrs. Bishop's Prinny,' cried Mrs. Smith, as they stared up wonderingly at the invader and watched him occupy, for his greater security, the inside of the saucepan. There was no note in the basket, no word of explanation on the label, but it was her opinion that if all the cats in Battersea were crowding round her she would not fail to recognise Prinny.

'If it isn't weird!' called out Mary, who was standing on a box in a vain effort to peer into the cat's stronghold.

'Old ma Bishop,' thought Harry distastefully. In his memory unpleasant associations still surrounded the name, for it was to the late Mrs. Bishop that he was so often nearly despatched in childhood, because her strict dominion could not but strike terror and a habit of obedience into the ungrateful heart of the worst of children.

On Mr. Smith Prinny's sensational appearance seemed to have had a curiously stupefying effect. 'Yes—and a Manx cat into the bargain,' he mumbled to no one in particular, giving the impression that some dark and strange atoms of ideas not unconnected with sorcery were stirring like gnats in his skull. It happened that the observation did not escape Mary's sharp ears. Vigilant to establish that Siamese cats were of paramount beauty and breeding, and infinitely superior to Manx



cats, she peremptorily pointed out his mistake. 'No difference, same thing,' he said abstractedly. 'They were called Manx cats when I was a boy.'

'But silly, a Manx cat hasn't got a tail. Surely you noticed that lovely tail!'

'Like beautiful black velvet,' said Mrs. Smith enthusiastically, and so encouraged Mary to further recklessness.

'Mother, is he ours now?' she inquired boldly, 'has someone given him to us, do you think?' Stepping down hastily from the box, she appealed to Harry. 'Quick,

get the steps and I'll fetch him down out of that dirty old saucepan. Hurry!' Saying which she snatched up an unopened bottle of milk and looked wildly round for a saucer.

The words and actions restored the hue of health to Mr. Smith's mental state. Collecting himself rapidly, he barred Harry's progress with a gesture, glowered at Mary, shot a look of hatred and disgust in the direction of the iron refuge of the cat. Then as he swelled with anger under the green sweater, he demanded to be told why his own hearth had been turned suddenly and at an unholy hour into—yes, a zoo. One moment he saw around him the green pastures of a quiet, peace-loving, God-fearing domesticity; he looked again and discovered an asylum for dangerous animals. It was clear to him now that the creature had been introduced into the house by a stratagem, and when the Banff race was about to lay a heavy burden on his energies. Nevertheless, he would expel it. No one could call him an unreasonable man, but the one thing above all others he would not tolerate was a Manx cat. It was common knowledge that these cats were of exceptional ferocity. This one looked to be capable of tearing mild and defenceless pigeons to pieces in cold blood. No, no, no —cats were worthless creatures; as worthless, as it were, as old sweepstake tickets. This one, no matter who had deceitfully introduced it, must go.

'George! When you've finished, George,' said Mrs. Smith coldly. He drew a long and deep breath, then composed his features into a martyrised style of expression which nevertheless was not entirely free of traces of anxiety. If the old lady was going to get angry with him. . . .

'Do you insinuate, George, that I know anything

about that cat coming here like this?' No answer being forthcoming, the question was repeated with still

greater firmness.

'Let me tell you,' replied he with dignified deliberation, 'let me tell you it never was my way to insinuate anything. I hate to insinuate like poison. Harry there, he'll bear me out—won't you, my boy?' But Harry was impatient to have the mystery of the cat exposed, and said so unequivocally. Old ma Bishop, he would like to remind them, had died six months ago; suppose they stopped gassing and said where the cat had been in the interval?

'Certainly, certainly—Gladys the servant took it in,' declared Mrs. Smith. 'You know—Mrs. Bishop's Gladys'; and with a repressive eye on her husband she explained that Prinny and the sum of £200 had passed to Gladys as a legacy from Mrs. Bishop. The servant had sworn to the old lady that harm should never come to the cat; if ever she found it impossible to keep him she would send him instantly to Mrs. Smith—and serenity had hovered over dear Mrs. Bishop's death-bed because of Gladys's promise.

Here the pigeon-fancier unfeelingly chose to draw another deep breath, and his wife, receiving it ill, visited upon him that extreme form of contempt known as shutting her eyes at him. Gladys would send a letter from Brighton, she added frigidly, and that letter would explain everything. Gladys was a good and feeling girl who had sympathy with people. This last oblique allusion to his cold-heartedness was too much for Mr. Smith. With a final injurious glance at Prinny, who had momentarily displayed his hostile, brilliant eyes above the saucepan's rim, he turned sharply and made off down the passage, blowing indignantly.

Two days passed but no letter came. Mrs. Smith, her severity vanished, declared many times that she couldn't understand it at all, and at discreet intervals inquired of her husband if his cold was better, this being a euphemistic reference to the state of sulks in which he found himself. On Mary a most mournful silence had fallen, for the cat was strong-mindedly refusing to eat or drink. After the manner of Diogenes, he had taken up permanent residence in the saucepan, and from there he spat tigerishly at her when she called his attention to tempting morsels of food. On the third day, however, occurred two important happenings: Mr. and Mrs. Smith set off on a Sunday excursion to Brighton to find Gladys; and Prinny broke his fast.

This last event brought Harry running in from the yard, where he had been studying the entrails of his motor-cycle. Mary had called him, and he found her staring at something on the scullery floor. It was a ragged disc of greaseproof paper the size of a soup plate, and on its rim, close together, were a pair of small black and white buttons. 'Just look at that!' she cried triumphantly. But black and white buttons on a disc of paper suggested nothing to Harry. 'Look again!' The paper smelt of something, of fish, and he realised that these were not buttons, they were the eyes of a fish, black-centred, white-rimmed, unpleasantly resembling a child's sweets which have been sucked and spat out. 'Yes, he's eaten it,' rejoiced Mary, 'he's eaten every bit of his fish, tail, head, bones—all of it but the eves, and they're as clean as a whistle. The love!' And her glance showered applause on Prinny, whose black chin was resting contentedly on the edge of the saucepan.

'All of it?' asked Harry, aghast. 'It's not good for him!'

'Of course it's good for him!' She looked at the eyes with an aboriginal air of triumph, as if she contemplated stringing them on a necklace, then moved to the shelf to call to the hero in the tenderest tones, begging him to come forth and conquer yet more whiting. Slowly, with infinite caution, he did come forth, to take up a thoughtful position on the edge of the shelf. She called to him again. He dropped delicately on to the gas-stove and paused to consider once more. She approached him. He stood his ground, head on one side. She reached out to take him. Then he leapt into her arms and rubbed his head repeatedly against her chin: his first gesture of affection to anyone in the house.

'Ah, the love!' said Mary, dandling him before her brother.

When she bore the cat proudly into the shop-parlour, she discovered that the Brighton voyagers had just returned. They had not found Gladys, but they had found the woman with whose husband Gladys had run off. 'A low sordid story,' remarked Mrs. Smith vehemently, and refused further details.

'And Prinny?' asked Mary casually.

'Your good father says he can stay—don't you, George?'

Mr. Smith tried to look virtuous but succeeded only in appearing uneasy.

ON THE day of the race from Banff Mr. Smith rose betimes and looked eagerly at the sky. No sun, bad light, clouds heavy with tarrying rain. Puffing anxiously, he hastened downstairs and out into the yard, where he uneasily cocked a weather eye and found that the wind was in the wrong quarter and rain indeed on the way. Fervently he hoped that bad weather did not extend all along the route, for if it did they might have a smash. He trembled at the thought of a smash: days of anxiety; hundreds of pigeons lost, gone for ever; the terrible ordeal of the few which did get through. Still, no need to worry yet, and if it came to that the blue chequer herself had once managed to reach home when the majority of the birds in the race had been lost. The blue chequer! In all honesty he could praise her for consistency and intelligence, for speed in entering the trap, for motherly kindness to her squeakers—yes, and for downright human lovableness in all things. On and off throughout the morning, while he was busy at his many tasks in the yard, he mused on the curious fascination and unique qualities of that pigeon.

Two o'clock came, and he paused from his labours. The tiny wooden bungalow strangely termed a loft was swept and garnished. Its floor, newly sanded, was free of pigeons' siftings; behind a front of wire netting the perches and walls showed their immaculate whiteness; the brass effigy of the renowned pigeon known as 'Old '86,' fixed above the door like a figurehead, had been polished till it shone. Mr. Smith sighed as he looked upon these works. The first and happiest phase of the day was over. Now came the struggle.

From the house he brought out the precious timingclock and set it down in the loft within convenient reach of the trap. With rising excitement he released two flur birds, whose duty it was to flutter and clap their wings every now and then and so attract the attention of any arrival from Banff which might be overshooting its own home. With the birds perched on his shoulder, and a bag of corn in his hands, he walked across the yard and stationed himself in a recess by the scullery window. Then he began to search the heavens for his racing pigeons. He told himself that it was early yet to expect them, much too early; in fact, on a day like this it was ridiculous to look seriously for their arrival before four o'clock, and very probably the weather was so bad that they hadn't been let up at all. Nevertheless, he did look seriously for their arrival, staring at the sky until the back of his neck began to ache and black spots showed before his eyes.

Presently Harry appeared at his side, tiptoeing lest he scare the flur birds, to whisper that a telegram from Banff had been received at the club; the pigeons had been liberated at daybreak. Mr. Smith said nothing, but looked a shade more sick about the gills. Rain was falling hard now. The struggle was becoming tense. This tenseness had communicated itself to everyone in the house, not excluding Prinny, who had been shut up out of harm's way in a front room. The pigeon fancier, as was his habit on the occasion of a race, had refused midday dinner, and Mrs. Smith, nervously haunting the scullery, thought it her duty to press tea and biscuits on him at intervals, only to be snubbed for her pains. Mary kept running in from the shop for news. Gloom sat upon the face of Harry as he sheltered at the open back door, listening and watching.

The afternoon wore on. At six o'clock Mr. Smith despairingly summoned his son, who was to get out his motor-bike and make the round of other fanciers in the neighbourhood, casually inquiring of them if any of their birds had yet come home. Harry was smiling cheerfully

when he returned. 'Not a feather!' he crowed, at which Mr. Smith managed to look relieved and desperate all in the same instant. It was his prophetic opinion that this was going to be one of the worst smashes in the whole history of pigeon racing. Heavy rain and strong winds were murder for birds with a long journey to make, he told Harry, as he set the flur birds in motion by throwing corn to the ground. But because the fight was still on he had noticeably cheered up, and when a cup of tea held by a bodiless hand was inserted through the window he consented at last to fortify himself. Harry, who also took tea, feigned optimism, saying that there were two things they mustn't forget: one was the blue chequer's gameness in the previous smash, the other that it was a two-day race. At this Mr. Smith beamed approval; not that he hadn't had the two facts on his mind all afternoon, but his renewed optimism required some outlet. He began to boast a little. The race closed for the first day at eight that evening. Very good. Now what was more likely than that the blue chequer would be quite near home when darkness fell? He could almost see her, pitching on some chimney for the night when she could travel no farther, then taking off again at daybreak and flying home at sixty miles an hour. He wouldn't mind betting sixpence that she wasn't more than ten miles away at dusk, and if his son was anything like a sportsman he would take on the bet. Bragging challenges of this sort never failed to offend Harry. Unsympathetically he pointed out that since all his father had to do to scoop the pools and make the big shilling was to get up early next morning, he was acting like a small-timer by talking about sixpenny bets. Mr. Smith claimed that the big shilling was as good as in his pocket, not to mention the cup; and he stepped hurriedly out

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into the open to watch the progress of some large,

flapping bird across the sky.

By seven he was despairing again, and Harry had to make the rounds once more. He returned with the same story—not a soul had clocked-in. Eight o'clock came, and Mr. Smith felt safe. Sighing with relief and exhaustion, he hurried off to the club-house, where he found fifty damp fanciers telling each other that they lived to fight another day. He laughed quietly, and hurried away. Within an hour, since he must be fit for the morrow, he was fast asleep in bed.

GREY DAWN drifted in through the scullery window as the pigeon fancier stood warming himself by the hoarsely breathing gas-stove. Quiet groans, yawns, deep curses, all those expressions of misery with which man greets that poetic figment, the dawn, flowed from him. On this cold and sombre morning his optimism had dwindled and died. As he blinked sleepily at the gas he told himself that perhaps Harry was right: maybe he was racing inferior pigeons and expecting them to do impossible feats. He groaned again. But in a few minutes some remembrance of the blue chequer warmed and stirred him, and soon he was rebuking himself for disloyalty and faintheartedness. With a great effort he moved to the sink and dabbed a little cold water about his face—that was better, better. He peered out of the window again. It was light now. He picked up the timing-clock and walked out to the loft. Inside the loft was a stool, and on this he sat studying the sleeping pigeons around him. The flur birds, awaking at his call, flapped awkwardly to his shoulder. He let them out through the door and they clattered on to the roof of the loft. All was still again.

Suddenly the two pigeons rose into the air with a great noise of wings, circled above the yard, and shot away between a gap in the houses. Mr. Smith jumped to his feet. Something had scared them—and if a bird arrived from the race now it might fly round and round with them! Very angry indeed, he was on the point of popping his head out to call them back, when a clap of wings sounded close at hand, and a moment later he heard a pigeon drop on to the roof like a stone. The blue chequer—ten to one it was the blue chequer! He gasped and gasped again. If she came in quickly the race was his—yes, yes, yes, he would run clean away with the cup! Seizing the bag of corn, he rushed across the sanded floor to the trap.

The trap was a sort of wide-slotted orange box attached to the front of the loft, and at its top formed an extension of the roof. Into this compartment he cast a handful of corn, which rattled like shot as he called the pigeon in alluring tones. Nothing happened, but out of the corner of his eye he saw the treacherous flur birds darting and spinning in the leaden air. If they drew the blue chequer after them! Hastily he thrust his head into the trap, craning to catch a glimpse of the invisible bird; and again he called to it. This time he heard it walk across the gritty roof towards the trap. He held his breath. The pigeon peeped through the bars at him. He peeped up at the pigeon. It was the barren hen.

Misery, misery! It had all happened before. At any second now that black-hearted bird would fly up to the roof of the house and stay there for hours—stay until dark most likely. 'This,' he thought bitterly, 'has

cattle-trucked it!' But he must remain calm, he must struggle as he had never struggled before to draw the creature in through those bars; and he was looking up imploringly at the barren hen when—crash! again on the roof. This time he shouted exultantly. The blue chequer—he felt absolutely certain that it was the blue chequer—had arrived like a thunderclap, like the marvel she was. He called twice, then broke off sharply—Hell! Hell! What in the name of God was going on up there? Then something fell into the trap like a ball of screwed-up paper—the barren hen. Something dashed itself through the bars in the wake of the barren hen and almost landed on Mr. Smith's head—a wildly chattering, gleaming-eyed something: Prinny.

'NATURALLY I was quite calm,' bawled Mr. Smith to his delighted and horrified audience in the shop-parlour. 'Covered the barren hen with my cap—opened the front of the trap and pushed the cat out into the yard—clocked in the old barren hen as easy as anything. But oh, what a time! What I've been through to win that cup!' He held trembling fingers before his wife's nose.

Mary cried, 'I told you, I told you all. The barren hen did it, and my money was on her!' And she added gaily, 'I think I shall spend it all on Prinny. If he doesn't deserve it for chasing the pigeon into the trap, who does? Of course, it was naughty of him to make a pass at the flur birds and hide at the back of the loft until he saw his chance to leap out at the barren hen, but—well, the love wangled it, didn't he dad?'

Mr. Smith tried hard to look amused.



ABOUT LOVE SONGS

James Stephens



few years ago some journalist of genius describing the young ladies who were then being presented at Court, called them the Lovelies, and I remember wondering how he

would have defined the slightly younger and slightly older than these, but settled the Orders for myself as the Pretties, the Lovelies, and the Beauties. The Pretties, of course, are not on view—they are still in our nurseries: the Lovelies are a show to others than us, and the Beauties are married to us, and are, perhaps, wondering how they deserved that ill.

In placing poetry something of the same order of limiting by defining may be attempted. There are the Pretties, and the Lovelies, and the Beauties in verse. Each of these tribes, as in those mentioned before, is distinct from the others: and, as above again, each has nothing to do with the others if that can possibly be avoided. The truth is, of course, that each thinks that the other is a pest. What the Lovely of seventeen thinks of the Pretty of thirteen could be uttered perhaps by Rabelais, but not by Plato. And what the Beauty of twenty-three thinks of Sweet Seventeen would not be uttered by anyone. The Pretties of Poetry, the Lovelies of Poetry, the Beauties of Poetry are completely distinct

things—and two of them are dead. I don't know at what date the Pretties died, but the Lovelies died a couple of centuries ago.

We say by courtesy that Time has three tenses, but, truly, there are only two tenses in time, and neither is in being. There is the past and the future. The present has nothing to do with time, it has only to do with us. So in poetry there is a past which will never come again: it has to do with the nursery: tis all written out, and can never now be added to. We call these lapsed arts the Nursery Rhyme and the Love Song. No mother any more wishes to be original as well as creative. thinks that the songs her mother taught her are good enough for the baby she will sing them to. Nursery rhyming or Child Song is an arrested art. Jack and Jill and Dickory Dock, Little Miss Muffet and Ba-Ba-Black-Sheep, and all the pretty rest of them, don't need to be added to. They, like dainty butterflies and delicate mice and lovely frogs, have done all they are going to do, and they now rest from all more labour. No mother is challenged by them, for no mother now thinks that her baby is the only baby that ever was born —a social change, indeed, but not a happy one. Mothers got out of poetry the instant they could do so, and may get out of babies the moment they get a chance. Women used to love babies and poetry, and now they don't know which of these two they loathe the most.

That form of verse is a lost art. But there are a million lost arts, and there is no need to mourn any one of them, or any lost thing. There is better to come than that, and if there isn't we had better all be dead. That poetry of the Pretties has been completely collected, is completely remembered, will never be forgotten, and is safely with us now to the end of time.

Of Love Poetry much the same may be said, adding that while we cannot say when the Child Song died, we know that the Love Song, or the Innocent Song, died with Herrick.

THERE ARE some strange songs in English.

A song is 'strange' when you cannot understand what it is about, and are yet greatly pleased with it. A poem can also be strange because it is too simple to need any understanding at all, being packed with nothing whatever except delight. Some of Blake's lyrics are of this type, and many of the earlier Elizabethan songs are of the innocency and pleasure which merit this description. In a famous phrase Donne says:

Here Love's divines—since all divinity

Is Love or Wonder—may find all they seek . . .

Delight is Wonder, and any wonder other than that, any wonder which needs elucidation, is mechanical or devilish. To please and to astonish is what a poem must do. That is, a poem must do both. If it does only one of these it is as it may be, but if it does both there is a poem.

Of course, when one is young everything can be surprising: to many people the fact that one can keep strictly to a measure, and also keep the rhymes coming in at the proper places, and be yet grammatical and consecutive, is a surprise which hides everything else of poesy from them. After a while (unless we are scientists) we find that the mechanics of verse, or of

anything else, are not delightful, however surprising they may be.

There is much verse, even in anthologies, which is merely rhymed prose. When a poem merely says the thing which it has set out to say it is no poem, for a poem undertakes to do much more than that. It undertakes, indeed, so curiously complicated a job of work that one could assert in advance that it is quite impossible to do it. Within a poem there must be (1) An intellectual statement (2) The emotion proper to that statement (3) The musical undertone native to these two and (4) A pace which is not the movement of anything else whatever, but is the gait and going of just those three.

Many people, critics included, have considered that a long-drawn but rhymed epigram is a poem, forgetting that an epigram exists by virtue of not having any emotion at all: it exists by being a thought, and by the attaining of the shortest possible expression of it. You will find in many anthologies poems like this by the great and famous amateur who signs himself Anon.:

My Love in her attire doth show her wit,
It doth so well become her:
For every season she hath dressings fit,
For winter, spring, and summer.
No beauty she doth miss
When all her robes are on:
But Beauty's self she is
When all her robes are gone.

In that verse there is an intellectual statement and nothing else. There is no accompaniment of emotion or music or pace. It is just a rhymed epigram, and not a good one. So, although in more tasteful form,

the same multitudinous versifier gives this piece of work:

THYRSIS and Milla, arm in arm together, In merry may-time to the green garden walked, Where all the way they wanton riddles talked; The youthful boy, kissing her cheeks so rosy, Beseech'd her there to gather him a posy. She straight her light green silken coats uptucked, And may for Mill and thyme for Thyrsis plucked; Which when she brought, he clasp'd her by the middle And kissed her sweet, but could not read her riddle. 'Ah, fool!' With that the nymph set up a laughter, And blush'd, and ran away, and he ran after.

This is an anecdote, and, as with the other, only the prose of the matter is given, because the emotion, the music, and the urgency of this encounter are not conveyed, nor even hinted at. There is a vast of rhymed matter which has nothing whatever of poetry except the form, and the form is not noteworthy either. Emotion and pace, come together, give the melodic quality to whatever thought is forward: and if that matter does not sing its own song it is not living, but is a parody or forgery of the thing.

When the rule just given is followed Delight plus Strangeness—Poetry, that is—follows, and the rule is a pretty good way of deciding whether a given piece of work is poetry or not.

THERE IS no such thing as a sad poem, or a sad song, nor is there sadness in anything whatever which has attained its artistic form. However sad such may seem there is joy there, for singing is a form of joy; it will transform everything, however reluctant, to its own nature; and, if it has come off, we delight in it, however heart-breaking the matter may superficially seem to be. When singers sing a sad song sadly they have ceased to be singers, have become dramatists, and have ruined a song. These crooners with tears in the voice and heartbreak in the punctuation are just murderers of song: and those others who will dramatise a song are no better. Sadness or drama should not be sought for in verse: something quite other than that is in control. A joy, its own joy, is what is provided, and the poem becomes itself by transcending its fundamental thought and emotion and action, and bringing into being another matter altogether than these postulated as basic. All initial matters are meant to be departed from, or a man would keep on being a baby, and an oak-tree would continue to be an acorn.

I HAVE suggested that surprise and delight must be so indistinguishably parts of a poem that while we know they are there we can scarcely tell which is which. I have also suggested that there is another somewhat which may be looked for in poetry. This third quality is Effortlessness. The phrase 'smelling of the lamp' has been used very precisely in this regard, and where it can be used a just, unfavourable criticism is conveyed. The great stanzas, the great poems, in English seem to have come into being (John Donne's excepted) as simply, swiftly, sweetly as a butterfly gets to and away from a blossom. It is this 'fitness' which is perhaps responsible

for the sense of delight we find in all fine art, for this, its effortlessness, is the life of the matter, and we delight in it as we delight in each other when that quality of fitness is observed amongst us. All difficult authors are poor-to-bad writers. In lyric poetry only that which seems to have written itself is good. The following poems have got on to the page effortlessly: and, so that the other two conditions be included, poetry is achieved. Effortlessness in itself is an indispensable part of the whole, but it is not enough by itself, or Twinkle, twinkle, little star, would be a poem—which it very nearly is.

OF CERTAIN poems it is impossible to say why they are strange or lovely. This one is lovely just because it is lovely, but it is strange mainly because it is a ruin. It is now impossible to say what the piece may have looked like when it was composed. It has been rebuilt by someone who remembered so much of it and invented the rest. We must mourn the destruction which time and forgetfulness have wrought upon a matter so lovely, but we may rejoice that the loveliness remains, however marred:

THE maidens came
When I was in my mother's bower:
I had all that I would.
The bailey beareth the bell away:
The lily, the rose, the rose I lay.

The silver is white, red is the gold: The robes they lay in fold.

The bailey beareth the bell away: The lily, the rose, the rose I lay.

And through the glass window shines the sun. How should I love, and I so young? The bailey beareth the bell away: The lily, the lily, the rose I lay.

Many of the older poems are of an enchanting simplicity. There are certain arts which are completely lost. This particular simplicity is one. Among the extraordinary talents which belonged to Shakespeare is this also, that he could be as simple and innocent as a peasant when he wished to be so. Blake, also, was always seeking after this in his lyrics, and at times getting very close to it. It is yet a little difficult to credit the Blakian innocence. Here are two verses from Clare, however, which completely recapture the accent:

I saw her crop a rose
Right early in the day,
And I went to kiss the place
Where she broke the rose away:

And I saw the patten rings
Where she o'er the stile had gone,
And I love all other things
Her bright eyes look upon.

Among the lovely and the simple things there are few indeed that are simpler and lovelier than this anonymous poem:

SHE is gentil and also wise; Of all other she beareth the prize, That ever I saw.

To heare her sing, to see her dance! She will the best herself advance,
That ever I saw.

To see her fingers that be so small!
In my conceit she passeth all
That ever I saw.

Nature in her hath wonderly wrought. Christ never such another bought, That ever I saw.

I have seen many that have beauty, Yet is there none like to my lady That ever I saw.

Therefore I dare this boldly say, I shall have the best and fairest may¹ That ever I saw.

Some things can never be bettered, and so I set this stanza as the gem of all love poems:

SEE, see, mine own sweet jewel, What I have for my darling! A Robin Redbreast and a Starling! These I give in hope to move thee And yet thou say'st I do not love thee.

The best (not the greatest) love song in English is:

THERE is a lady sweet and kind, Was never face so pleased my mind; I did but see her passing by, And yet I love her till I die.

Her gesture, motion and her smiles, Her wit, her voice, my heart beguiles; Beguiles my heart, I know not why, And yet I love her till I die.

Cupid is wingèd and doth range, Her country so my love doth change; But change she earth, or change she sky. Yet will I love her till I die.

About that poem—There is a Lady—I will interpose a personal note. I read the poem many years ago.

Then I had occasion to quote it to a friend, and could only remember the first verse, so I invented the poem in this fashion:

THERE is a lady sweet and kind, Was never maid more to the mind: I did but see her passing by, And yet I love her till I die.

Nothing know I of her degree, The Queen of Hearts she is to me: But be she low, or be she high, Yet I do love her till I die.

Cupid has wings, and he doth range By passing rich, and passing strange: Rich, strange, or rare naught reckon I For I do love her till I die.

It is rare that one recreates a poem, and I can now never recollect the original, but only my rendering of it.

Marlowe's Passionate Shepherd to His Love is delicious, and so is Raleigh's Reply to it. It is not often that a reply is really up to a question. This reply is so good that the two poems now go together, and we cannot think of the one without the other, nor cease wondering which is the better:

COME live with me and be my Love, And we will all the pleasures prove That hills and valleys, dales and fields, Or woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks. And see the shepherds feed their flocks By shallow rivers, to whose falls Melodious birds sing madrigals. And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool Which from our pretty lambs we pull; Fair-linèd slippers for the cold, With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy-buds With coral clasps and amber studs: And if these pleasures may thee move, Come live with me and be my Love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing For thy delight each May morning: If these delights thy mind may move, Then live with me and be my Love.

Sir Walter Raleigh's Reply

IF all the world and love were young, And truth in every shepherd's tongue, These pretty pleasures might me move To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold, When rivers rage and rocks grow cold, And Philomel becometh dumb; The rest complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields To wayward winter reckoning yields; A honey tongue, a heart of gall, Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses, Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten, In folly ripe, in reason rotten. Thy belt of straw and ivy buds, Thy coral clasps and amber studs, All these in me no means can move To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed, Had joys no date nor age no need, Then these delights my mind might move To live with thee and be thy love.

As you came from the holy land of Walsinghame is one of the very curious poems in English. The authorship of this work has been given to Raleigh, but this writer does not think that he could possibly have written it. The poem is a duologue, and from what we know of Raleigh's fine work it yet seems impossible that he could have imagined, say, the fourth verse. But then, also, we cannot imagine anyone else who could either. The fourth verse and the eighth and ninth verses are completely unknown work, and are as completely marvellous.

As you came from the holy land Of Walsinghame, Met you not with my true love By the way as you came?

How should I know your true love, That have met many a one As I came from the holy land, That have come, that have gone?

She is neither white nor brown,
But as the heavens fair;
There is none hath a form so divine
In the earth or the air.

Such a one did I meet, good sir, Such an angelic face, Who like a nymph, like a queen, did appear In her gait, in her grace. She hath left me here alone
All alone, as unknown,
Who sometime did me lead with herself,
And me loved as her own.

What is the cause that she leaves you alone And a new way doth take, That sometime did love you as her own, And her joy did you make?

I have loved her all my youth, But now old, as you see: Love likes not the falling fruit, Nor the withered tree.

Know that Love is a careless child, And forgets promise past: He is blind, he is deaf, when he list, And in faith never fast.

His desire is a dureless content, And a trustless joy; He is won with a world of despair, And is lost with a toy.

Of womenkind such indeed is the love, Or the word love abused, Under which many childish desires And conceits are excused.

But true love is a durable fire, In the mind ever burning, Never sick, never dead, never cold, From itself never turning.

Campion's Laura is another of the lovely curiosities of English verse. The rhythm of this poem was never used before, and has never been used again. Campion was a musician: well, here is as curious a piece of music as ever got into verse:

Rose-cheek'd Laura, come; Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's Silent music, either other Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow From concent divinely framèd: Heaven is music, and thy beauty's Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords need for helps to grace them;
Only beauty, purely loving,
Knows no discord;

But still moves delight, Like clear springs renew'd by flowing, Ever perfect, ever in themselves eternal.

We can scarcely think of Sylvia without remembering the music of Schubert. That is a pity, for this poem has its own music. The last line is, perhaps, a weak one: at least it doesn't seal the poem as a last line should.

Who is Silvia? what is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness:
Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness;
And, being help'd, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing,
Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her let us garlands bring.

INFINE POETRY there is no passion. Passion would ruin it. The reader will have noticed that a majority of the love poems which give us pleasure are curiously tranquil. They please us by raising no questions, and they satisfy by enabling us to dwell merely in the delight of their moment, and in the pure worldliness of their intention.

The poems which I call 'great' are on another emotional scale altogether than are those fine pieces which I have referred to. Great poems do not satisfy at all, or they do not satisfy in the thoughtless and lovely fashion which is in the province of all simple and lovely things. They leave the reader still questioning, for they are of the complicated world, and they raise more questions than can be answered.

Great poems are great because they are untranquil. A certain quality of pride and fierceness has ousted the gentler emotions. But, truly, the passion of love has no time, no room for any but its own egoistic, and selfish, and almost savage purposes.

To end this small selection of love poems I add four very remarkable pieces. The first, by Chaucer, is as noble a piece of lyrical versification as we have. And here is the great poet speaking of his lady as though she were a queen, and, quite unmistakably, telling all other ladies to get off the earth.

Hyd, Absolon, thy giltë tresses clere; Ester, ley thou thy meekness al aédoun; Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manére; Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun, Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun; Hyd ye your beautes, Isoud and Eleyne, My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Thy faire body, let it nat appere, Lavyn; and thou, Lucress of Rome toun, And Polixene, that boghten love so dere, And Cleopatre, with al thy passioun, Hyd ye your trouth of love and your renoun; And thou, Tisbe, that hast of love swich peyne; My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Herro, Dido, Laudómia, alle y-fere, And Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun, And Canacè, espyèd by thy chere, Ysiphilė, betraysèd with Jasoun, Mak'th of your trouthe neyther boost ne soun; Nor Ypermistre or Adrian, ye tweyne; My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Here Marvell out-Donnes Donne:

HAD we but world enough, and time, This coyness, Lady, were no crime. We would sit down, and think which way To walk and pass our long love's day. Thou by the Indian Ganges' side Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide Of Humber would complain. I would Love you ten years before the Flood; And you should, if you please, refuse Till the conversion of the Jews.

My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow:
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, Lady, you deserve this state;
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song: then worms shall try
That long preserv'd virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue Sits on thy skin like morning dew, And while thy willing soul transpires At every pore with instant fires, Now let us sport us while we may, And now, like amorous birds of prey, Rather at once our time devour Than languish in his slow-chapt power. Let us roll all our strength and all Our sweetness up into one ball, And tear our pleasures with rough strife Thorough the iron gates of life. Thus, though we cannot make our sun Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Here is despair, despair in love: The Definition of Love is the supreme utterance of this. A mind could dream on Andrew Marvell for the rest of its life: and mourn this love for the same term. What a fine gentleman wrote these lines:

My love is of a birth as rare As 'tis for object strange and high: It was begotten by Despair Upon Impossibility. Magnanimous Despair alone Could show me so divine a thing, Where feeble Hope could ne'er have flown But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive Where my extended soul is fixed; But Fate does iron wedges drive, And always crowds itself betwixt.

For Fate with jealous eye doth see Two perfect loves; nor lets them close: Their union would her ruin be And her tyrannic power depose.

And therefore her decrees of steel
Us as the distant poles have placed,
(Though Love's whole world on us doth wheel)
Not by themselves to be embraced:

Unless the giddy heaven fall, And earth some new convulsion tear, And, us to join, the world should all Be cramped into a Planisphere.

As lines, so loves oblique may well Themselves in every angle greet: But ours, so truly Parallel, Though Infinite can never meet.

Therefore the love which us doth bind, But Fate so enviously debars, Is the Conjunction of the Mind, And Opposition of the Stars.

We come finally to John Donne. With Blake he shares the reputation of being the oddest poet in English. He is so odd, indeed, that a majority of readers will have nothing whatever to do with him. He will not court

them, nor placate them, nor please them. He was a clergyman, and, with Herrick and Swift, must have been as odd a clergyman as ever instructed others not to do as he did. But it is in this point that he is odder than all others, and all else. All the other poets are writing about love, writing around and about love, that is, but Donne is not. He is writing that love, his love, and on it he makes no compromise, and he hales his lady along, in great honour indeed, but if necessary by an arm, or a neck. He is, perhaps, the only poet who ever was in love, and his are the strangest and greatest love poems in the language. His poems are as personal to him as are his arms and his legs; and, barring Herrick, every other poet has striven to be as nonpersonal as could possibly be managed. Poets, in general, being, even, horribly well-bred. Here then is Donne's poem The Anniversary. It is the most royal expression of love in English lyric. It is also the 'greatest' love poem in the language:

All kings, and all their favourites,
All glory of honours, beauties, wits,
The Sun itself, which makes times, as they pass,
Is elder by a year, now, than it was
When thou and I first one another saw:
All other things to their destruction draw,
Only our love hath no decay;
This, no to-morrow hath, nor yesterday,
Running it never runs from us away,
But truly keeps his first, last, everlasting day.

Two graves must hide thine and my corse, If one might, death were no divorce. Alas, as well as other Princes, we, (Who Prince enough in one another be,) Must leave at last in death, these eyes, and ears, Oft fed with true oaths, and with sweet salt tears; But souls where nothing dwells but love (All other thoughts being inmates) then shall prove This, or a love increased there above, When bodies to their graves, souls from their graves remove.

And then we shall be thoroughly blest,
But we no more, than all the rest;
Here upon earth, we're Kings, and none but we
Can be such Kings, nor of such subjects be.
Who is so safe as we? where none can do
Treason to us, except one of us two.
True and false fears let us refrain,
Let us love nobly, and live, and add again
Years and years unto years, till we attain
To write threescore: this is the second of our reign.

BACKGROUND OF THE BLUES Jain Lang

I

HERE IS MORE than one kind of jazz, and the

kind I am concerned with is not the industrial product pumped out on the air waves at all times of the day and night in America and Europe. Industrial-jazz is big business, a complicated vested interest on which depend the fortunes or livelihoods of music-publishers, song-manufacturers, danceband leaders and their employees, makers of instruments, night-club hostesses, and many other more or less hardworking people. It is a fascinating study for sociologists, but I have nothing to say about it. The other jazz is a music of the people (not quite the same thing as 'popular music'), and money-making, while sometimes incidental to, is never the sole purpose of its production. The life expressed by this other jazz is that of the common people, white and coloured, in many great cities of the United States. In its origins it goes back a long time, and to widely various places, but it began to be distinctive and recognisable in the Mississippi Delta, round New Orleans, towards the end of the nineteenth century.

New Orleans, about 1900, was at an interesting stage

in her flamboyant history. Her character and atmosphere came from the teeming Mississippi Valley at her backdoor and the filibustering Gulf of Mexico at her front door; from her French inheritance; from Confederate memories; from something Yankee brought south by the carpet-baggers, something Spanish washed up by the Gulf tides; from waves of immigrants, mostly Italian, German and Irish; and from the remnants of several African cultures—for the city had been the chief slave-market of the old régime. What effect this hotchpotch of influences had on polite, well-to-do citizens it is difficult to say, for polite New Orleans was not articulate in a way that anyone has thought worth remembering. But a good deal is known about the reactions of the common people.

The common people were, for common people, doing pretty well. New docks were being built along the twenty miles of river frontage. The rowdy heyday of the Mississippi river traffic had passed, but railroad development made up for that, and export figures were climbing. There was plenty of work, handling the sugar, molasses, rice, tobacco, Indian corn, wheat, flour, pork and cotton that poured into and out of the port. Wages were good, so there was money to spare for street parades, dances and barbecues. All those things, in New Orleans, called for music. During the six days of the annual Mardi Gras carnival anyone who played any instrument was sure of good money. People—says Spencer Williams, the Negro musician who was a boy in New Orleans then—people didn't walk about the streets, they danced; and everybody whistled or sang all the time. The vegetable pedlars sang the blues to draw customers. The junk-men, the waffle-men and the piemen played the blues; and another Negro musician

Jelly Roll Morton, recalls: 'They could take a ten-cent toy trumpet, take the wooden mouthpiece off, having only the metal for mouthpiece, and play more blues with that instrument than any trumpeter I have met throughout the country.' Without any valves in their horns they could play all the notes of the scale, simply by the use of the lips; and they could be heard three blocks away. These horn-blowing pedlars were so important in the life of the common people that even now, after more than forty years, the names of those who played the blues best are remembered—Buddie Canter, Josky Adams, Game Kid, Frank Richards, Sam Henry...

Then there were the spasm bands. They played along the sidewalks outside the saloons and theatres, usually with an equipment of freak instruments—bass viols with bodies made out of sugar-barrels, percussion instruments from the kitchen, elaborations of the paper-and-comb. There were white, as well as Negro, spasm bands, and the most famous, led by one Warm Gravy, graduated prosperously from the sidewalks to the stage. It is probable that the legendary Stale Bread played with Warm Gravy's gang at one time—Stale Bread, the newsboy fiddler and blues singer, remembered for his *envoi* to every blues:

If anybody ask you who was it sang this song, Just tell 'em Stale Bread's done been here and gone.

The saloons and sidewalks where spasm music and street singers found their most generous audiences were those of the French Quarter, and particularly in Storyville. Until Alderman Story's intervention in the nineties, the brothels for which New Orleans had a nation-wide reputation had been scattered throughout the Quarter. This was not merely bad for morals, it was bad for

property values. The Alderman promoted an ordinance restricting the bagnios to certain streets, and time's revenge was to perpetuate his memory in the popular name of as gaudy a red-light district as America has known. Many of the brothels were enriched with every luxury that house-proud and purse-proud bawds could buy, and the leading harlots were national figures. Another name for this Yoshiwara was Anderson County, because its general headquarters was Tom Anderson's saloon, where most of the early virtuosi of jazz, including several still living and well known, earned their first good money. Spencer Williams passed his boyhood in a famous sporting house, the Mahogany Hall, which was run by his aunt; he remembers that each night at his bedtime he would hear the opening chords from the piano in the saloon, and when he woke up in the bright sunshine of next morning he would hear the pianist still beating out the blues. The pianist, possibly, was Tony Jackson, whose speciality was Elgin Movements in My Hips (a ribald reference to the Elgin Watch advertisements), or it might have been Slap Rags White, or Santoy, or Black Paderewski. Such men as Jackson were known right up the Mississippi Valley as far north as St. Louis, and the Chicago World's Fair in 1898 drew them still farther North to plant the seeds of the blues idiom in a city where it has notably flourished.

Any important event in the life of Negro New Orleans was an excuse for a street parade, with a brass band to lead it. Funerals were very important events. Wingy Mannone, who, though white, grew up among Negro neighbours in the slums around Perdido Street, describes a funeral cortège: 'On the way to the graveyard they all walk slowly, following the cornet player. The cornet player is the boss. Sometimes it takes them four hours

to get to the cemetery. All the way they just sway to the music and moan. At the graveside they chant questions, such as "Did he ramble?" "Did he gamble?" or "Did he lead a good life until the police shot him down on Saint James Street?" Then, after the body is buried, they go back to town, and all the way they swing. They just pull the instruments apart. They play the hottest music in the world."

Another use of music was as advertisement. Dances and picnics were announced by sending an orchestra out in a wagon bedecked with streamers. On Sundays, when many dances were arranged for the same evening, several wagons loaded with competing bands toured the city, and the streets were clamorous with 'carving' contests. These were musical duels between the best men—usually the trumpeters—in the rival bands. Certain corners, preferably where there were saloons, became recognised battlegrounds, but Joe 'King' Oliver would chase his rivals all over town if they were afraid to stand and meet the onslaught of his cornet.

Oliver's pupil, Louis Armstrong, came to be still more feared. They tell of a time when Armstrong was riding in the wagon of another trumpet player, Lee Collins, who was advertising a picnic. A rival, Henry Rena, came in sight, and Armstrong hid. Rena, confident of victory over Collins, tied the two wagons together to prevent the enemy's escape, when Armstrong jumped up, grabbed Collins's trumpet and carved Rena into small pieces.

Musicians enjoyed the prestige that in this country the crowd gives to professional footballers. When the great Buddy Bolden marched in a parade he was attended by an escort of young women competing for the privilege of carrying his trumpet when he was not playing. This Buddy Bolden has become fabulous, a towering, misty figure in folklore. 'On still and quiet nights,' Jelly Roll Morton tells us, with at least mythological truth, 'while playing Lincoln Park, Bolden could be heard on the outskirts of the city, Carrolton Avenue section, from twelve to fourteen miles away. When he decided to fill the park, that's when he would exert his powerful ability.' Bolden established the jazz tradition that trumpets go with temperament; exceptional players are expected to be wild men, to have rambling feet and hot heads. When King Oliver was carved by Mutt Carey he publicly hurled his horn away—the kind of spacious gesture that was looked for, just as it was thought natural that he should go to a pawnshop next day and buy another trumpet. Carey's playing was the antithesis of Bolden's 'powerful ability.' He was the first trumpeter to choke his horn—that is, to play with a mute,1 though his mute was nothing more elaborate than a drinking-glass held in the bell of the instrument. As for Bolden, let Louis Armstrong round off his story: 'Buddy got drinking too much—staying up two or three nights a week without sleep and going right on to work again, like so many hot musicians. They get low in their minds and drink some more. People thought he was plumb crazy the way he used to toss that horn. The sad part of it is that Buddy actually did go crazy a few years later and was put in an insane asylum in Jackson, Mississippi. He was just a one-man genius that was ahead of 'em all -too good for his time.'

¹ Mutes bemuse many commentators. Carl Van Vechten (in Nigger Heaven) has a fearsome picture of derby hats being used as mutes—for saxophones! Even the wideawake Christian Darnton (in You and Music) seems to believe that muted trumpets were borrowed by jazz from the 'legitimate' music of Les Six. The borrowing was the other way round. Squeeze-mutes, wa-was and hats are as 'illegitimate' as the strips of wall-paper and cigarette labels in a Picasso collage; and have a similar justification—if they produce an expressive effect not otherwise obtainable.

New Orleans music steamed up the Mississippi to Memphis and St. Louis, even as far north as Davenport and St. Paul, in the riverboats. These were, and are, floating dance-halls, which tie up each night at a different town. 'Those wild nights on the riverboats!' says Wingy Mannone, 'that was something. The boat never rocked and it was like playing on land, only everybody was happy because they were taking a trip, and they danced all night and treated me like an old friend.' The king of the riverboats was Charlie Creath, who could stop a razor fight by the powerful magic of his trumpet.

The kind of impact that the music from the Mississippi Delta made on Northern ears is suggested by Louis Armstrong's account of a night in St. Louis when he was playing in the riverboat band of Fate Marrable. With Marrable, who was a pianist, and a mellophone player named Davey Jones, he was a guest of honour at the city's principal coloured dance-hall, and, he says, 'We could see the boys in the band had heard about us. They kept looking over at us, in a curious way, but not letting on they were. We watched close to see what their music would be like, because we knew they had a big reputation in St. Louis, and naturally we were interested to see how our New Orleans bands would stack up against them. Well, we were surprised. In no time at all we could tell they were doing things that had been done down home years before. The leader would try to swing them away from the score, but they didn't seem to know how.' The three from New Orleans were later introduced to the dancers with considerable ceremony, and began to play. 'We let it swing, plenty. We did not need any scoring at all. We almost split that room open. I got so hot I hardly knew there was a room. Davey threw that big horn around so you'd have

thought he'd gone clean out his head, and Fate kept right along with us. Well, they all liked it fine. They stood up and yelled for more and the band boys were all on their feet, too, and the leader came over and shook our hands. My, that was a big night for me, it was the first time I had an ovation like that in a big city away from New Orleans. I don't mean to say I took it all to myself, but just that I was part of it.'

There is no excellent beauty, said Francis Bacon, without some strangeness in the proportion. Strangeness may have been the first attraction of the Delta music. It brought white listeners as well as coloured to the riverside, among them the son of a timber-merchant in Davenport, Iowa; his name was Leon Beiderbecke and his story, in its essentials if not in historical detail, has been told by Dorothy Baker in her novel Young Man With a Horn. By listening to riverboat bands from the south Beiderbecke learned to play two or three tunes on the cornet, and so came to join a riverboat band himself. A fellow-member of the band was a Jewish boy from Chicago, still in short pants, who had set out to earn a living with his clarinet after his father had been run over in the street—one Benny Goodman, whose income in these days runs into many thousands of dollars Beiderbecke-known to jazz as Bix-and Goodman were falling into line with a movement that had already been established in the Middle West by white musicians from New Orleans. Tom Brown's Band from Dixieland, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and the New Orleans Rhythm Kings had sold jazz up the river.

The names of these white pioneers are significant—such names as La Rocca, Nunez, Lopez, Rappolo, Mannone, Sbarbaro, Mares, Brunies, Larry Shields,

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Loyacano, Emmet Hardy. They were of immigrant stock, the sons of the Italians, Central Europeans and Irish who had come to New Orleans in the eighties and nineties to compete with the Negroes for the unskilled hard work of the docks and streets. New Orleans rated them little higher than Negroes—in 1891 eleven Italians were lynched in the city gaol. Nowhere in the list is there a French name, no link with the old bourgeoisie. Indeed, bourgeois New Orleans, through its oracle the Times-Picayune, emphatically disclaimed responsibility for the music that had grown up in its slums and stews. 'Why,' asked the newspaper on June 20, 1918, 'why is the jass music, and, therefore, the jass band? As well ask why is the dime novel or the grease-dripping doughnut. All are manifestations of a low streak in man's tastes that has not yet come out in civilisation's wash. Indeed, one might go farther, and say that jass music is the indecent story syncopated and counterpointed. Like the improper anecdote, also, in its youth, it was listened to blushingly behind closed doors and drawn curtains. but, like all vice, it grew bolder until it dared decent surroundings, and there was tolerated because of its oddity. . . . We hear the hum of the Indian dance, the throb of the Oriental tambourines and kettle-drums, the clatter of the clogs, the click of Slavic heels, the thumpty-tumpty of the negro banjo, and, in fact, the native dances of the world. . . . It gives a sensual delight more intense and quite different from the languor of a Viennese waltz or the refined sentiment and respectful emotion of an eighteenth-century minuet. In the matter of the jass, New Orleans is particularly interested, since

¹ Many French names are encountered among New Orleans jazz musicians—Celestin, Baquet, Bechet, St. Cyr, Piron, for example—but they are those of Negroes. These are descendants of slaves owned by French-Louisianians who adopted their owners' names.

it has been widely suggested that this particular form of musical vice had its birth in this city—that it came, in fact, from doubtful surroundings in our slums. We do not recognise the honour of parenthood, but with such a story in circulation, it behoves us to be the last to accept the atrocity in polite society.' Of course the Times-Picayune was disgusted. Would you expect The Times to be sympathetic to an art-form created, independent of bourgeois values, in Shadwell, Shoreditch, Soho and Saffron Hill?

Independence of bourgeois values was for the makers of jazz not choice but necessity. They would probably have preferred, these white Dead End Kids and Negroes. to have learned to read music and to play their instruments in the way sanctioned by the conservatoires; that would have meant the security and respectability of the salon and the concert-hall, instead of the crazy hazards of the saloon and the bitch-parlour. It is all summed up in a wistful saying of Wingy Mannone, that he envied Louis Armstrong his luck; when you know what that luck amounted to you can appreciate the depth and bitterness of Mannone's unconscious criticism of the society in which he was born. Armstrong's luck was this —that as a child of ten he was sent to a reformatory; no extravagant benevolence of fortune, one would think; but in the reformatory he did have a few rudimentary music lessons and had a cornet to practise on. Mannone had to borrow a cornet when he could and had to find out what he could about the rules of the game. He has never complained of the street-car accident that, when he was a boy, cost him his right arm; but if God had only been kind enough to have got him shut up in a reformatory—ah, that would have been something!

'We should make it a point of civic honour,' thought

the Times-Picayune, 'to suppress the jass music.' It would have needed a mightier force than the sense of honour possessed by the city of Storyville and Huey Long. A people had found its voice—the people of the streets, the docks and levees, the railroad yards, not only in New Orleans, but in Chicago, New York, Kansas City, St. Louis, Memphis, Dallas; such people as labourers, truck-drivers, bellhops, scrubwomen, waiters, garage hands, taximen; a kind of people which had never before been so powerfully articulate. In diluted and distorted forms this music serves to entertain the richfrom San Francisco to Shanghai and is mass-produced for the middle classes by every broadcasting system: but the farther it moves away from its origins among the common people—the proletariat, if you can swallow that horridly political word—the more it loses in expressiveness and integrity.

2

AFTER NEW ORLEANS, Chicago. Between 1910 and 1920 nearly a million people, half a million whites and three hundred and fifty thousand Negroes, migrated from South to North. The boll weevil was making work scarce in the cotton belt, and expanding industry made work plentiful in the Middle West and the Atlantic States. Negroes poured into the stockyards, packing plants, foundries, steel mills and railroad and automobile shops of Chicago. The population of the Black Belt, between Twelfth and Thirty-first Streets, doubled in five years, most of it—as the Chicago Commission on Race Relations noted—housed in tenements that were 'frail, flimsy, tottering, unkempt': the Commission added tartly that it was usual to find in each tenement a

low-class dive where 'an automatic piano thumps through the night until closing hours: on the mirrors are pasted chromos of "September Morn" and other poses of nude women.' When coloured people tried to move out of this ramshackle, bawdy congestion their public-spirited white neighbours bombed them back again—there were fifty-eight such bombings between 1917 and 1920. In 1919 six days' race rioting cost thirty-eight people their lives and left about a thousand homeless and destitute. But if life in the Black Belt was violent and uncertain it was not without entertainment, and by the beginning of the twenties practically every notable New Orleans musician had moved to Chicago. Armstrong, Oliver, Freddy Keppard, Clarence Williams, Johnny Dodds, Jimmy Noone and Kid Ory were among the Negroes, and the New Orleans Rhythm Kings headed the whites. At the Friars' Inn the Rhythm Kings earned as much in a month as they had earned in twelve at home, and 'got so nigger-rich they wouldn't go round the corner without catching a cab.' Money was pouring into night life, for it was the beginning of Chicago's gangster decade: Big Iim Colosimo, Johnny Torrio and Dion O'Banion were marshalling the city's ten thousand professional criminals in principalities which Capone later welded into an empire. Night-club musicians leaving the stand between sets learned not to be surprised if when they came back they found their instruments shot full of holes. One of the musicians who used to crowd the smoke-dim speakeasy where the Rhythm Kings played has said: 'I used to get a terrific sock out of Rappolo riding high on his clarinet, with one foot braced high up on a pillar alongside the stand and so full of marijuana he could scarcely move out of his chair at the finish of a set.' Marijuana, the American equivalent of hashish or

bhang, is a recurring *motif* in the story of Chicago and Harlem jazz, appearing under a string of such aliases as tea, weed, reefers, muggles and jive; eventually it sent Rappolo, a pale, handsome youth, to an asylum, but in the early days it seemed only to stimulate the flow, hour after hour, of his brilliant, fantastic but exquisitely controlled improvisations. It was all ear-music, for only two men in the band could read notation.

The manager of the Friars' Inn used to complain that customers who had money to spend were crowded out by hero-worshippers who had none—men from other bands and boys still at high school. Some of the schoolboys were, a year or two later, to become the creators of Chicago Style, a development of the jazz idiom as distinguishable from the New Orleans manner as the accent of Illinois speech is from the accent of Louisiana, but unmistakably the same language. Besides the Friars' Inn they haunted the coloured hang-outs-the Pekin, Dreamland, Royal Garden, Savoy, Apex and Kelly's Stable—and their music stems from the trumpetplaying of Armstrong and Beiderbecke, the clarinet playing of Dodds, Noone and Rappolo, and the blues singing of Bessie Smith. That is to say, its sources are mainly Negroid, though it is a white creation. Chicago Style is terse, harsh, individualist; it has the energy and 'hard-boiled eloquence'-in Wilder Hobson's phraseof contemporary American prose. Its most important exponent, Frank Teschmaker, a quiet, intense little man with a single-minded devotion to the clarinet, spent most of his time playing the saxophone in 'sweet' bands whose dreary performances he despised. For the nigger-rich prosperity of the men who played authentic jazz soon faded before the growing popularity of the saccharine travesty purveyed by

Whiteman, Waring, Art Hickman and other show-men-bandleaders. 'I wonder,' Teschmaker once said to his friend, Bud Freeman, 'if we shall ever get a chance to play hot for a living.' He never had a chance. In 1932 he was killed in a car smash after a drinking party.

Chicago saw the development of another type of jazz, one that belongs almost exclusively to Negroes, and to the poorest of those. The boogie-woogie pianists were successors to the roving strummers who have lived adventurously along the levees and in the railroad construction camps and mining towns ever since frontier days. They halted wherever they found a piano, and they played unconventionally because they had never heard of the conventions. However, they set up some conventions of their own. Most of them played only the blues, and, having to make themselves heard in crowded, noisy cellars and back rooms, they developed a vehemently percussive style. In time certain figures in the bass became loosely standardised—the Fives, the Chains, the Rocks, and so on. Gradually such men as Cow Cow Davenport, Piano Kid Williams, Jimmy Yancey, Cripple Clarence Lofton, Blind Leroy Garnett, Montana Taylor and Speckled Red established a tradition.

Prohibition made difficulties for the rambling piano player. Small Negro ginmills and good-time flats could not afford to buy police protection, and so there began the vogue of the stomp, chitterling rag, rent party, whist party or boogie. Convivially-minded people got together in anybody's room where there was a piano and pooled their quarters to provide savage bootleg liquor, pigs' feet and chitterlings, and a handout for the pianist. These diversions were long, loud and uninhibited, and—

unless somebody had the forethought to check the gentlemen's razors and guns-were occasionally homicidal. If all the keys of the piano were unbroken the player was agreeably surprised, and if the piano had happened to be in tune he would have been dumbfounded. In these conditions nobody wasted time on the fragilities of technique; what was needed above all was a relentless left hand to satisfy the dancers' demand for driving and exciting rhythm. So a style was evolved that from the simplest elements produced results of the most interesting complexity in the daring exploration of crossrhythms. The frequent use of dotted eighths and sixteenths echoed the ragtime mannerism of twenty years earlier; while the hypnotic persistence of the left-hand figures and the fondness for tremolos played with rhythmical rather than melodic purpose suggest the guitar rather than the piano.

Boogie-woogie piano style crystallised in the playing of Clarence, better known as Pinetop, Smith; indeed, the school takes its name from his most famous blues, Pinetop's Boogie-Woogie. Besides being a remarkable pianist, Pinetop was an accomplished blues singer, with a voice of acrid geniality. He was a mild-mannered fellow and it was by the unluckiest of chances that he was shot dead during a dance-hall fight of which he was a neutral spectator. His tradition was kept alive through years of obscurity by his friends, Albert Ammons and Meade Lux Lewis. In those days Albert and Lux worked spasmodically as taxi-jockeys in the Black Belt. but they found it hard to keep jobs, since the sound of a piano in a tenement room at midnight was a temptation neither could resist. They just had to park the cab and get in on the music. Let them stand, in their disinterestedness and unpretentiousness, as representative figures, the true descendants of the generation which first made jazz down in the Delta.

If this were a history of jazz it would be necessary to write at least as much again about its development in New York, Kansas City, and elsewhere, and to discuss Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Red Nichols and many others who have helped to form or deform it. What I have aimed at is merely a dissociation d'idées, the clearing away of a confusing and obscuring mass of debris-Bright Young People, crooners, expensive cafésociety, Lambeth Walkers, million-dollar symphonicsyncopating band leaders, Broadway hit-writers—and the restoration of jazz to the common people who created it, for whom it is a spontaneous medium of expression. The archetypal figure is not to be found among the human clichés I have just catalogued. It may, perhaps, be a young man, white or Negro, in faded jeans, plucking at a guitar with a broken knife-blade for plectrum, or sitting at a barrelhouse piano marking a solid beat with hand and heel; or perhaps a sweating, coatless trumpet player riding out of this world for nobody's sake but his own; or simply someone singing the blues.

3

THE BLUES is not the whole of jazz, which draws its material from many sources. The tunes played by the New Orleans brass bands on street parades were based on military marches dating back to the Civil War and earlier. Their funeral dirges came from spirituals. Pre-jazz dances were made over in the new idiom; for example, Tiger Rag, which to millions of people is the

typical jazz tune, was improvised by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band from a French quadrille played at the Quadroon Balls for which New Orleans was famous a century ago. And, of course, hundreds of vaudeville and musical-comedy songs have gone into the common stock and stayed there if the chord sequences have been found useful by the improviser. But if the blues is not the whole of jazz, the whole of the blues is jazz; it is the one form which has no existence apart from this idiom. It would be possible to judge the leading jazz musicians on the data of their blues performances only; Beiderbecke's golden tone and lyrical elegance, Armstrong's prodigious melodic invention, instrumental mastery and 'iron attack,' Ellington's inspired handling of tonecolour, and the various qualities of Teschmaker, Bechet, Hodges, Hawkins, Joe Smith, Spanier, Jack Teagarden, Harrison, Hines, and the boogie-woogie men have all been most amply displayed in the blues.

Necessarily, the blues has a very simple structure. The evidence of the least sophisticated blues-singing still to be heard in Harlem suggests that, as Wilder Hobson says, 'the blues may originally have consisted merely in the singing, over a steady, percussive rhythm, of lines of variable length, the length being determined by what phrase the singer had in mind, with equally variable pauses (the accompanying rhythm continuing) determined by how long it took the singer to think up another phrase.' Thus the street-corner guitar player, leaning against the wall of a saloon, the bar-room pianist, the leisurely watcher of incoming trains, the loafer on the levee, the scrubwoman in the kitchen, the laundress keeping boredom at bay, would comment on the world about them.

This is not the place for a minute exploration of musi-

cal origins, and, in any case, it is impossible to fix on paper the essential peculiarities of jazz. As long ago as 1919, when jazz was very new to Europe, Ernest Ansermet noted that 'dans l'ordre mélodique, bien que son accoutumance à nos gammes ait effacé en lui le souvenir des modes africaines, un vieil instinct pousse le nègre à chercher son plaisir hors des intervalles orthodoxes: il réalise des tierces ni majeures ni mineures, de fausses secondes, et tombe souvent d'instinct sur des sons harmoniques naturels d'une note donnée; c'est alors surtout qu'aucune musique écrite ne peut donner l'idée de son jeu.' The debt of both spirituals and blues to the juicy harmonies of Hymns Ancient and Modern is obvious, though it should be said that the relationship is more apparent in well-groomed concert platform versions of spirituals than in the gospel songs which have not yet been prettified. In the most usual form the blues verse consists of twelve bars of music in common time: the first group of four bars is on the common chord on the keynote, the second four-bar phrase is on the chord of the subdominant, and the third on the chord of the dominant seventh. To each phrase goes a line of verse—or rather to part of each phrase, for the words usually end on the first beat of the third bar. Traditionally the first line of verse is repeated in the second line, and the third line rhymes, more or less roughly, with the preceding two; thus:

I love that man, tell the world I do, Yes, I love that man, tell the world I do, But when he mistreats me it makes me feel so blue.

Possibly when Billie Holiday first sang that she hadn't made up her mind, as she sang the opening line, what the last line was going to be, and if so the repetition would

give her time to think of her conclusion. The breaks between the end of each line and the end of each musical phrase gave her accompanists opportunities for improvised flourishes, so that a good time was had by all. The freedom given to both singers and instrumentalists by this simple framework is necessary because jazz is improvisation.

One need not have 'the blues' to sing or play the blues. It is true that many of the best-known blues are in fairly slow tempo and the most hackneyed theme is the complaint of the deserted or 'mistreated' lover. (In these examples, as in all that follow, repetitions of first lines are omitted):

I've got those doggone achin'-hearted blues, Cause I want someone to tell my worries to.

Can't read, can't write, gonna buy me a telephone To talk to my baby until she comes back home.

Sittin' on a kerbstone worryin' my heart and soul Just like a possum hidin' in a groundhog's hole.

Blow, wind, blow, blow my baby back to me, Since she's been gone nothin's like it used to be.

I been drinkin' muddy water, sleepin' in a hollow log Because my baby treats me like a lowdown dog.

I love my baby, but she don't love me, She gave me some squirrel-juice, she's got me runnin' up a tree. In the evenin', in the evenin', mama, when the sun goes down, Ain't it lonesome, ain't it lonesome, when your lover's not aroun'

When the sun goes down.

The sun rises in the East, all day long it gives us light;
Ain't it hard to tell, hard to tell, which woman will treat you right
When the sun goes down.

Last night I lay a-sleepin', I was thinkin' to myself,
I was wonderin' why the woman you love mistreats you with
somebody else
When the sun goes down.

I went to the racetrack, my man he won,
Gave his money to another girl and never gave me none:
Oh, you don't know, you don't know my mind;
You see me laughin', laughin' just to keep from cryin'.

I said to papa, 'Can you stand to see me cry?'

He said, 'Woman, I can stand to see you die.'

Oh, you don't know, you don't know my mind;

You see me laughin', laughin' just to keep from cryin'.

Don't the moon look lonesome, shinin' through the trees?

Don't your house look lonesome when your baby packs up to leave?

Bracketed and contrasted with these are many songs of dismissal, of which the most brutally direct is Bessie Sm th's:

Papa, papa, you're in a good man's way, I can find one better than you any time of day.

You ain't no good, so you'd better haul your freight; Mama wants a live wire—papa, you can take the gate.

I'm a redhot woman, just full of flamin' youth:
You can't cool me, daddy; you're no good, that's the truth...

I'm one woman don't want no no-good man; You're just like a worn-out, badly fitted 'lectric fan.

Your youth done fail, all your pep's done gone. Pick up that suitcase, man, and travel on.

One would expect the male counterpart of this to be less implacable, and a valediction by Joe Turner, of Kansas City, has something of the magnanimity of 'Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part':

I'm goin' away, babe, just to wear you off my mind; If I stay round here I'll be troubled all the time.

So help me, honey, but I don't love you, Well, I just don't like them funny old ways you do.

It's rainin' here, babe, stormin' on the sea:
You mistreat a good man when you mistreat me. . . .

I'm sorry, babe, sorry to my heart, We've been together so long and now we've got to part.

If, however, many blues are complaints of unrequited or unsatisfied love, as many are frank celebrations of satisfaction. The frankness is important. All cultivated persons agree that the sexual life of, say, the Trobriand Islanders may be discussed in the minutest detail and as publicly as you please; diffidence creeps in when the subject of study is part of our Western social organisation. But it is a remarkable thing that in our own kind of world, subject to roughly similar tabus, there are still people who are able to make simple and direct state-

ments about love; without leering double-entendres, and without the defiant uproariousness of the typical English bawdy song. It is a very long time since English popular song has been able to make as plain a statement as 'Christ, that my love were in my arms, and I in my bed again!' Blues singers still make statements as direct and unselfconscious as that.

She's got eyes like diamonds, she shines like Klondike gold, Every time I see her it sends my mellow soul.

My daddy rocks me with one steady roll;
There's no slippin' when he once takes hold.
I looked at the clock and the clock struck one,
I said, 'Oh, daddy, ain't we got fun!'
And he kept on rockin' me with that steady roll.

My daddy rocks me with one steady roll;
There's no slippin' when he once takes hold.
I looked at the clock and the clock struck two;
It's tight like that, I'm telling you:
And he kept on rockin' me with that steady roll. . . .

Come here, pretty baby, sit down on your daddy's knee; I want you to tell everybody how you've been sending me.

Well, if that's your secret, better keep it to yourself, 'Cause if you tell me I might tell somebody else. . . .

You can take me, baby, put me in your big brass bed, Go ridin' me, baby, till my face turns cherry red.

He wears high grey pants striped with green 'n' yellow, And when he loves me he's so fine and mellow.

¹ To 'send' is to induce ecstasy in.

Incidentally, there is much material in the blues for a Cambridge connoisseur of poetic ambiguities, and William Empson might consider the last-quoted verse an example of an occasion 'when two or more meanings all add to the single meaning of the author,' for both 'high' and 'mellow' have the secondary, slang meaning in Harlem of 'drunk.' Certainly when Billie Holiday sings the verse she conveys a half-drowsy intoxication of gratified desire.

In yet another erotic category are such songs as Do Your Duty, sung by Bessie Smith with the terrifying intensity of Vénus toute entière à sa proie attachée—the force of this, however, is in the singing, not in the banal words—and the self-vaunting of a large group of blues:

I'll bet my money I can take any woman's man in town; I can take your man and I won't have to run him down.

The sun goes down, the stars begin to shine:
Before the evenin's gone your man will be mine. . . .

The sun goes down, Lord, Lord, Lordy! to-day. You can tell the world I took your rider away.

I'm a young woman an' ain't done runnin' round, Some people call me a hobo, some call me a bum, Nobody knows my name, nobody knows what I've done; I'm as good as any woman in your town. I ain't no high yaller I'm a deep yaller-brown.

I ain't goin' marry, ain't goin' settle down, I'm goin' drink good moonshine and run these browns down. See that long lonesome road—don't you know it's gotta end? An' I'm a good woman an' I can get plenty men. Some men like me 'cause I'm happy, some 'cause I'm snappy,

Some call me honey, others think that I've got money, Some tell me, 'Baby, you're built for speed'—

Now, if you put that all together, makes me ev'ythin' a good man needs.

The eighteenth-century Japanese contemptuously called their colour-prints *Ukiyo-ye*—pictures of the passing world. It would be an apt name for a class of blues that covers every kind of event, from a Presidential election to a railroad disaster, the workings of the WPA to Joe Louis's latest fight. Here, in the most moving of Bessie Smith's blues, is a close-up of a Mississippi flood:

When it rains five days and the sky turns dark as night There's trouble takin' place in the lowlands at night.

I woke up this mornin', can't even get out of my do'—
There's enough trouble to make a po' girl wonder where she
wants to go.

They rowed a little boat about five miles 'cross the pond.

I packed all my things, throwed them in and they rowed me along.

When it thunders and lightnin's and the wind begins to blow There's thousands of people ain't got no place to go.

Then I went and stood upon some high old lonesome hill, Then I looked down on the house where I used to live.

Backwater blues done caused me to pack my things and go, 'Cause my house fell down an' I can't live there no mo'.

Oh, oh, I can't move no mo'
'Cause there ain't no place for a po' old girl to go.

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In many cases the point of a blues is lost without some knowledge of the social background. Take:

If your house catch on fire 'n' they ain't no water roun', Throw your trunk out the window 'n' let the shack burn down.

This may seem improvident advice until one remembers those 'frail, flimsy, tottering' tenements in the Black Belt of Chicago, and appreciates that in many American cities the tenant of a burning house in a Negro quarter might have a long time to wait before the fire department took notice of his plight. And a slight acquaintance with the fate of the Scottsboro boys helps in understanding the vehemence with which Red Allen sings:

I sure do hate that wagon, I mean that old police patrol; The best that I can wish it, I hope it falls off in some hole.

And if that wagon gets you make up your mind to go to gaol: You'll feel just like a hound-dog with a tin can tied to his tail.

Mean Old Bedbug Blues has been described by an American surrealist, Campbell Holmes, as a theme 'handled in a perfect surrealist manner,' the successful re-creation of 'the nightmare in all its awesome intensity.' It is reasonably certain that whoever strung the words together meant only to laugh off one of the inseparable inconveniences of poverty:

Somethin' was moanin' in the corner, I tried my best to see; It was the mother bedbug prayin' to the good Lord for some mo' to eat.

Bedbugs big as a jackass will bite you and stand and grin, They'll drink up all the chinch poison and come back and bite you again.

I had a quart of moonshine layin' on my dresser drawer; Two big bedbugs came in and drank it and bit me 'cause they wasn't no more. Gonna get myself a wishbone, these bedbugs here done got my goat—

Gonna wish that every bedbug goes out and cuts his throat.

Sometimes the blues throws up a fragment of sardonic portraiture, as in this vignette:

Old man Ben, he's so bent and lame, He loves his baby, an' he ain't got a job to his name.

She's got a head like a monkey, feet like a bear, Mouth full of tobacco, squirtin' it everywhere,

But she's his baby, he loves her just the same; She's his Garbo an' he's her big he-man.

Often it has the convincing banality of conversation reported by John Steinbeck:

I asked the brakeman to let me ride the blind. He said, 'Now, girlie, you know this train ain't mine.'

Sometimes the means used to evoke a mood are indirect enough to suggest Symboliste technique:

The blues jumped a rabbit, run him a solid mile:
The po' fellow lied down 'n' cried just like a natural child.

Or the evocation may be achieved by juxtaposing statements with no obvious connection:

I stood in my window, saw a poor boy walkin' in the rain, I heard him sayin', 'It's a lowdown dirty shame.'

I walked the streets all night till my shoes was soakin' wet— I didn't see nobody that looked like my baby yet.

All the blues I have quoted are improvised, in the sense that they were made up by a singer and not written by a professional songwriter. Perhaps it would be more

exact to describe them as traditional, for any new and striking expression passes into the common stock. The memories of such great blues singers as James Rushing, Joe Turner, Sleepy John Estes and Big Bill Broonzie are storehouses of hundreds of verses which they arrange and rearrange at their discretion. There are, as well, written blues, but very few as expressive and convincing as the improvisations. Some remarkably effective blues have been written by Langston Hughes, and it is interesting to compare his:

Love is like whiskey, love is like good red wine; If you want to be happy you've got to love all the time.

with the improvisation:

Love is like a faucet, it turns off and on, But when you think it's on, baby, he's turned it off and gone.

Lately, W. H. Auden has experimented in the blues idiom; and it is significant that when he has been merely experimenting—as in his *Funeral Blues*, written for a cabaret singer—he has produced verses as cute and phoney as:

He was my North, my South, my East and West, My working week and my Sunday rest, My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song; I thought that love would last for ever; I was wrong.

But when he is not self-consciously slumming, when, as in Refugee Blues, he is moved by a passion of pity and indignation, the results are as authentic as:

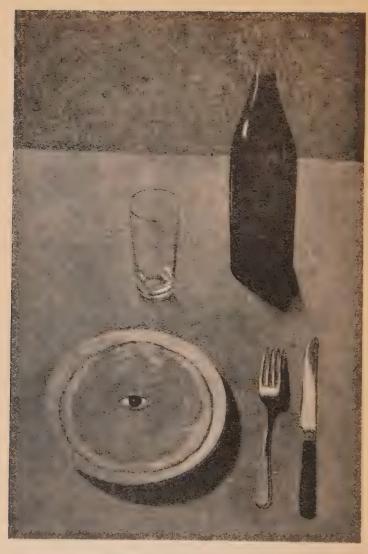
Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in;
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, they weren't German
Jews. . . .

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors A thousand windows and a thousand doors, Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

It is possible that the blues may have a contribution to make to the general body of poetry analogous to that made in the eighteenth century by the rediscovered ballad. That, however, is something which only poets can decide. I am gratefully content to leave the blues with the people who made it because they needed it—the boy with the guitar, the rambling kid at the bar-room piano, the washerwoman . . . common people.







RENE MAGRITTE

Le Portrait

NONSENSE

Eric Newton



HAVE NEVER quite understood just what it is that the Surrealists are up to. Not that they ever hesitate to explain themselves, but that, to me, their explanations fail to

explain. I rather enjoy their works, but I suspect that I enjoy them for the wrong reasons. I am a natural romantic. I like my art well flavoured with subject-interest. I am also a natural escapist. And though the Surrealists admit to a modified form of romanticism, I imagine they would hotly deny the charge of escapism.

A picture of an ordinary thing—an ordinary slice of ham on an ordinary plate, for instance—can please me immensely, but only if it is painted with the masterly authority of a Velasquez or the reverent affection of a Chardin. The same slice of ham on the same plate painted by an eagle like el Greco or a pedestrian like Frith would leave me unmoved. El Greco would have wasted his power in trying to turn the ham into an angel and the plate into a nimbus; Frith would have failed to do anything at all with it. He could, I am afraid, appreciate it neither as food nor as form. But let a human eye be embedded in the exact centre of the ham and a new situation arises. El Greco would have made a masterpiece of such a subject: so would Frith. But

not Velasquez. He would have painted it so skilfully that its queerness would have disappeared. The mystical exaltation of el Greco or the bourgeois surprise of Frith would have been replaced by mere æsthetic appreciation. Velasquez, coming down to breakfast one morning, might have found that baleful orb incorporated into his usual slice of ham, but being an artist and an æsthete he would have regarded it as nothing more than a nice colour-scheme or a new relationship between sphere and oblong. For him, a glass marble on a piece of blotting paper would have served the same æsthetic purpose. His picture would betray neither exaltation nor surprise, but just painterly competence. Velasquez was a superb painter, but I think he must have been a very dull man.

I have little patience with these prosy æsthetes. They take half the fun and all the nonsense out of things. I like a man to say: 'Well, well, if that isn't queer!' when he finds an eye on his ham. I like to think that he called to his wife and perhaps asked the neighbours in to share his natural excitement, and that they, knowing his weakness for dabbling in water-colour, said: 'You know, George, you ought to make a picture of that.'

So far, I imagine, the Surrealists would agree. They would be interested in the wild improbability of the eye-and-ham juxtaposition (though they would regret that it had happened in real life rather than in the artist's imagination) and they would not be at all interested in its æsthetic implications. They are only concerned to make the almost-impossible appear possible. A nude lady contemplating her own metamorphosis into a chest of drawers is a good subject for an elaborate drawing by Salvador Dali. There is no gusto, no sense of adventure in his rendering of it. Dali uses every device



[COLLECTION OF EDWARD JAMES]

SALVADOR DALI

in his elaborate technical equipment to make the scene look not only credible but commonplace. To the nice average man whose standards are based on logic and a decent feeling for likelihood and probability (a feeling, for example, that a woman is one thing and a chest of drawers another, and that if the two get mixed up something has gone wrong), the metamorphosis in Dali's drawing is either funny or disgusting. If he is a romantic and an escapist, like myself, he will be charmed by the temporary suspension of the usual laws of nature. If not, he will be disturbed and upset by it. But the Surrealists are neither charmed nor upset. They discover a delightfully outrageous idea and then they eliminate the delight and cancel the outrage by giving it a firm basis in the psychology of the unconscious.

Being no psychologist I am willing—reluctantly willing-to believe that Salvador Dali is clever enough to be consciously aware of his own subconscious processes and that he can therefore make accurate pictures of them. It certainly seems odd that a man should be aware of something of which he must, by definition, be unaware, but perhaps I have got my definitions wrong. If so it is of no consequence. What matters is that to a lover of 'art,' to a Velasquez fan or a Chardin fan, most of Dali's pictures are atrociously bad. Æsthetically they are excruciating, and he himself would be the last to deny it. He would even avow with some fervour that he had no honourable æsthetic intentions. And I would believe him. I would even respect him for his refusal to be dragged into the art-for-art's-sake racket. But when a Surrealist tells me that his pictures are psychological documents he loses my sympathy. He is like a man who spoils a good joke by explaining it. 'You see,' he says, laboriously, 'the ham is looking at

you, not you at the ham.' At once the picture is deflated. The inexplicable has been explained. It has ceased to be nonsense. It is no longer a fantastic assault on one's sense of the normal. It is just another aspect of the normal. It is just another nineteenth-century narrative painting with a moral.

The Surrealists are never tired of proclaiming their ancestry—Hieronymus Bosch, Blake, Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll. 'Madmen all,' they say, and then they add, 'but in our madness there's method—Freudian method.' And as they say it one's ardour cools. What one took for art of an uncomfortable but interesting kind turns out to be not art at all but merely science in fancy dress.

I think their ancestors would have been annoyed by the Surrealists' explanations. I am not sure about Bosch; there is in his work a grim determination to make your flesh creep that suggests a twentieth-century

Surrealist born several hundred years too soon. But Lear would surely turn in his grave at the thought that his Dong's lovely luminous nose had a phallic origin or that Runcible Spoons were obstetric symbols. Lear was an artist. He believed in the imagination's power to create a world that transcended logic. But he did not forget logic's existence. All through Lear's nonsense



BOSCH: A Drawing

runs a steadying accompaniment of common sense, like the chorus in a Greek tragedy. Faced with the abnormal, 'they,' the members of Lear's chorus, insist on putting forward the commonsense view. Sometimes 'they' are snubbed ('When they asked him "What for?" he replied, "You're a bore") but they are never discouraged. An Old Person of Slough dances at the end of a bough, and at once, with officious solicitude, 'they' remark 'If you sneeze You might damage the trees.' Sometimes 'they' protest more vigorously. 'But they said, "Take some snuff, You have talked quite enough, You afflicting Old Man at a station".'

No such chorus is ever allowed a hearing in the Surrealist world. 'They' are never permitted to observe 'We would rather have jam Than an eye on our ham,' or 'The drawers in your chest Interfere with our rest.' On the contrary, your true Surrealist carefully excludes every possibility of protest on the part of the representatives of sanity by erecting an elaborately sane facade round his nonsense. His chief weapon is a camera-like technique and a reliance on every kind of trompe l'oeil device known to the painter. What is it in a picture that makes objects look 'real'? Shadows, of course. And what gives those objects a convincing habitation in space? Perspective, surely. Hence the black shadows and the illimitable lines of perspective that are rarely absent from orthodox Surrealism. Suspend any law of nature you like but never, never betray the laws of optics.

With Lear and with Thurber the method is different. To them a drawing is a symbol, not a representation. It is an equivalent in terms of line for an adventure of the mind. To Dali and Magritte it is not a symbol but a picture of a symbol. Lear and Thurber have no need



'Look out, here they come again!'

to deceive the eye. The Dong casts no shadow. He is as free from the bonds of perspective as he is from the law of gravity. So are the members of Thurber's little supper party, one of whom is being visited by transparent owls. (Note how the unvisited at once take on the function of Lear's 'they'). Lear and Thurber, being artists, know that the uncensored innocence of the imagination must be accompanied by an uncensored innocence of eye. They must become children again. And therein, I think, lies Lear's importance as a draughtsman. He was the first post-Renaissance artist to understand and use the child's way of drawing—of 'thinking and then drawing a line round his think.' His influence on subsequent nonsense-art has been incalculable. In releasing the draughtsman from slavery to the laws of appearance he has also altered and intensified the quality of the nonsense-monger's imagination. Gradually the cult of the crazy has spread, into the films, into posters, into the music-hall, even into the pages of Punch, that last refuge of no-nonsense humour. Lear's innocence of eye has even revolutionised the art-teacher's conception of his own function. Among advanced teachers, innocence of eye has now acquired an almost religious significance. At a recent conference on methods of teaching I was surprised to find that perspective is viewed to-day much as the 'Facts of Life' were viewed by Victorian parents, as a regrettable law of nature, whose existence cannot be denied but which should never be discussed. At one of the conference meetings a problem was gravely brought forward. Little Johnnie had asked teacher what was wrong with his drawing of 'Here we go round the mulberry bush,' in which all the feet pointed inwards and the dancers at the bottom of the picture were consequently upside down. Teacher had hesitated to

spoil Johnnie's innocence by revealing the facts of perspective. If little Johnnie had asked 'Where do babies come from?' it would have been so much easier.

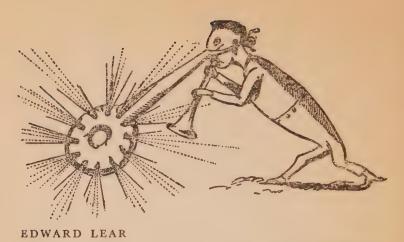
To spoil innocence is one thing. (Sooner or later it is bound to be spoilt. Perhaps it is right to put off the evil moment as long as possible.) To achieve it is another. Lear's attainment of it (remember that he was a sophisticated and quite uninspired topographical draughtsman who gave lessons in watercolour to Queen Victoria) was remarkable. He could write—and to Tennyson of all people—'Do you think there is a Pharmouse or a Nin somewhere near you . . . so that I could paint in it quietly?' It is not thus that Dali would write to André Breton.

Lewis Carroll had some of the same childlike quality, though not as completely as Lear. His Gryphon and Mock Turtle are not illustrations to his own text. They are creations running parallel with it. Tenniel's, on the other hand, are representations of the creatures, shadows, perspective and all. Tenniel's method is half-way to Surrealism, but only half-way. For though Tenniel had the Surrealist respect for shadows and perspective he also had the artist's respect for normality, and in his work the two cancel each other out. They are mutually exclusive.

Tenniel never came within miles of Alice's dream-world because Alice herself is always there, the chorus that represents the normal point of view. Max Ernst or Dali could have painted a Mock Turtle that would have made your flesh creep, but neither of them would have made the mistake of introducing Alice into the picture. That would have spoiled the dream.

This war has shed some surprising rays of light on dark places. Did I say that I rather enjoy the Sur-

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The Dong with the Luminous Nose

realists? That is not strictly true. I did enjoy them before the war. Then it was rather nice if someone deliberately tried to make your flesh creep. Nowadays Surrealism is just a practical joke in bad taste. . . . No, even that is not strictly true. Surrealism is obsolete. It has been overtaken by life itself. Last week, inside the smashed window of a barber's shop, I passed the remains of one of those waxen busts of faultlessly coiffured ladies. Most of her lower jaw had disappeared and her lovely blue eyes, joined together with wire, were lying pathetically on her snowy bosom. The sight would have made Magritte hang his head in shame at the inadequacy of his own contribution to sensationalism. The classic Surrealist example of an umbrella and a sewing-machine meeting on an operating table is to-day a feeble flight of the imagination. Juxtapositions far more haunting and formidable can be met at any street corner. Surrealists did, in their day, sharpen our sensitiveness to the finer shades of fantasy: but their day is over. They no longer point the way to adventure; they toil laboriously behind it. They are scientists and the bomber has beaten them at their own game. But your artist, your true nonsense-monger who deals in creation rather than construction, remains as valid as ever. No war could make anachronisms of Lear or Thurber. One place at least where there is still a possibility of escape from the Surrealist reality that surrounds us is the Land where the Bong Tree grows.

P. G. WODEHOUSE John Hayward

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This paper neither was conceived nor is published as a contribution to the controversy about the behaviour of Mr. P. G. Wodehouse in Germany. It was written, when he was yet a prisoner of war, as a literary inquiry. Not everyone will agree with this estimate of the novelist's achievement, but the validity of the inquiry remains unimpaired by Mr. Wodehouse's political misdemeanours.]

enviable fate—of popular and prolific novelists to be neglected by the critics and taken for granted by the hackney reviewers, it is curious that no enterprising critic, so far as I know, has taken Mr. P. G. Wodehouse seriously enough to make a proper study of his work. For, during the past forty years, Mr. Wodehouse has been not merely a popular and prolific novelist; he has also proved himself to be a writer of exceptional originality and humour and is, indeed, the only author who has ever been made a Doctor, honoris causa, of the University of Oxford for a lifetime's research into the nature of young men in spats, eccentric peers and gentlemen's personal gentlemen.

This high mark of academic esteem, moreover, was not conferred, as it might conceivably have been (dons being addicted at times to wayward fancies and enthusiasms), at the persuasion of a powerful group of Common Room fans, but with the general approbation of a great body of admiring readers both within and without the walls. The Doctor's robe was merely a symbol of universal applause made up of innumerable personal tributes like that paid by the late Lord Oxford and Asquith, when he chose Mr. Wodehouse's latest novel to console him (as console him it did) on the long journey south from Paisley after his final defeat at the polls in 1924. Such recognition, one would suppose, might have led by this time to the publication 'At the Clarendon Press' of at least a learned monograph on this distinguished Doctor's work, if not of a Shorter Wodehouse Dictionary or an Oxford Dictionary of Wodehouse Place-Names. Yet, apart from a rumour that Monsignor Ronald Knox was engaged upon a work of exegesis, and the promise of a bibliography designed to harass the growing body of Wodehouse 'collectors' on both sides of the Atlantic with pronouncements on secondary bindings and Anglo-American 'firsts', nothing has been done.

Neglect by the critics at home is hardly more surprising than the absence of critical appreciation abroad, where Mr. Wodehouse has a very wide following and where a number of his books have been translated (baffling as this process must seem) not only into all the major European languages but into Czech, Swedish and Polish. From the United States, which is Mr. Wodehouse's second and all but spiritual home, not to mention France—the two great dissertation-producing nations—there should surely have emerged by now a doctor's

thesis, e.g. Utopianism in P. G. Wodehouse's Middle Period or Pellham Grenville Woodhouse [sic]: Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre—or at least a modest but discerning prolusion. Yet here again, a task that might be considered at once a duty and a pleasure has been left undone.

It would be presumptuous, therefore, to try to cram into a short paper the substance of a treatise that has still to be written; or, even if it were possible, to cover, in a few thousand words, the abundant material available for critical comment and analysis in the sixty volumes of novels and short stories that Mr. Wodehouse has produced since the early years of the century. The most I can hope to do is to make a few general statements about them and indicate a number of points of interest that may be useful to his readers and possibly suggestive to future critics. The most I can hope to achieve is to persuade anyone who reads this essay to return to them with renewed delight.

It does not appear to be generally known that Mr. Wodehouse, like Mr. T. S. Eliot, began his literary career in a City bank, returning after the day's work to modest rooms in Walton Street, Chelsea, to write school stories for the Captain and the Public School Magazine. Like Mr. Eliot, again, Mr. Wodehouse decided to exchange his job in the bank for a less certain but more sympathetic one in journalism. Here, however, the parallel between these two eminent writers ends; for Mr. Wodehouse did not leave the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank in order to edit an earlier Criterion, but to fill a summer holiday post on the old Globe at £3 a week. Although this was not a starvation wage in the early 1900's, it was sufficiently small to require eking out with whatever small sums he could earn by selling his stories. The change, with its attendant risks, was quickly justified; Mr. Wodehouse sold his stories and began contributing regularly though anonymously to Punch. In due course he joined the permanent staff of the Globe as editor of, and chief contributor to, the daily 'By the Way' column, which was exactly the place for the rhyming jingles he could produce without effort on almost any topic under the sun and for the kind of odd and ludicrous faits divers of which he was a considerable connoisseur and collector. A florilegium of choice passages from this column—a railway bookstall trifle and now, consequently, a scarce piece—was published in 1908.

By 1908 what the precisians would call Mr. Wodehouse's 'Early Period' was drawing to a close and he had established himself in his profession. Between 1902, the date of his first book The Pothunters (of which, by the way, two variant bindings exist), and the autumn of 1907, he had published five novels of public school life; a volume of school stories; the first version, undistinguished but now excessively rare, of Love amongst the Chickens; William Tell Told Again, a potboiler with hideous colour plates for the Christmas market; and, in collaboration with Herbert Westbrook, a colleague on the Globe, Not George Washington. Mike, the last and best of his school stories, and incidentally the longest of his novels, was to appear in 1909, the year, also, of The Swoop, or How Clarence Saved England, a farcical but not unprophetic treatise about a frustrated German invasion. after, with the single exception of the year 1911, when it was perhaps too hot to write, and for the next thirty years he was to produce at least one novel or collection of short stories every twelve months, the novels usually appearing first in serial form, the stories more often than not in the Strand magazine. Discounting potboilers, turned out as much to satisfy an eager but undiscriminating public as to support their maker, the quality of these hardy annuals has been extraordinarily consistent from first to last.

The lazy reviewer has more than once assumed that he has done his duty as a critic by pronouncing that 'Mr. Wodehouse goes from strength to strength', when, in fact, there is no evidence in his work, judged as a whole -as it should be but seldom is—to support this contention. His output over a period of thirty years has been remarkably uniform, allowing for normal variations; it reflects not a progressive development or strengthening of talent, but a steady level of achievement. There are 'vintage' novels and 'ordinary' novels, early as well as late; indeed, throughout his career Mr. Wodehouse has often produced some of his most finished work almost concurrently with sound but undistinguished stuff. This, after all, is what might be expected of a novelist who writes invariably to a formula, or, more exactly, within the framework of certain fixed conventions, and whose characters reappear in novel after novel, if not as the same people at least as recognisably standard types. What one does not expect, however, is to find Mr. Wodehouse turning from school stories to his own inimitable genre of humorous fantasy with his peculiar talent for this kind of writing all but fully matured from the start.

There can be little doubt, I think, that the discipline of journalism and, in particular, the exacting task of being funny to order in a daily 'feature' column, had done much to train and develop this talent as well as to form his style. A further formative influence, of special interest to the student of style, may be traced to Mr. Wodehouse's wide knowledge of English literature, both verse and prose, and notably of Shakespeare's plays.

The literati need not be reminded that the devil citing the scriptures to his purpose is not more apt than Mr. Wodehouse is at allusive quotation of familiar passages from the English classics, subtly invoked to point a moral or adorn a tale. Mr. T. S. Eliot might profitably have mentioned this in his essay on Tradition and the Individual Talent. It is, incidentally, one of the most characteristic of Mr. Wodehouse's devices and, though it was to be progressively elaborated and its scope enlarged, was already effectively used in his first book, The Pothunters, at the beginning of Chapter XVII. Another marked feature of his matured style is also evident even in this early work—his mastery of light, fencing dialogue, which as far back as 1902 the Spectator described as 'excellent'. By 1910, in fact, when Mr. Wodehouse decided to put away childish or rather schoolboy things, he had the measure of his strength as a writer and was ready, it would seem, to make the best use of it without preliminary fumbling or misgiving.

While there are relatively few memorable passages of verbal wit and humour—the broad generalisation followed by the ludicrous exception; the deliberate understatement and absurd hyperbole; the felicitous invention or turn of phrase; the ingenious malapropisms and the rest—in the novels immediately succeeding Mike, this should not be attributed, I suggest, to a deficiency of talent for this kind of writing, or to any lack of experience in handling it, but simply to the fact that he had not yet found the most suitable material on which to use it. There is presumptive evidence even in the school stories, not to mention the files of the Globe, that the author's flair for the grotesque was fully developed and only waiting to be pressed into service. The opening of 'Bradshaw's Little Story' from Tales of

St Austin's (1903), the author's third book, is a fair example, and I believe the earliest example of the authentic Wodehousian manner:

The qualities which in later years rendered Frederick Wackerbath Bradshaw so conspicuous a figure in connection with the now celebrated affair of the European, African & Asiatic Pork Pie & Ham Sandwich Company frauds, were sufficiently in evidence during his school career to make his masters prophesy gloomily concerning his future.

And, as further evidence, I think it would be allowed by the experts that Reginald Farnie, the incorrigible, blasé fourteen-year-old 'Prefect's Uncle', in the book of that name, is an adumbration of two typical Wodehousian types—the enfant terrible and the boulevardier. Indeed, with the exception of 'the inimitable Jeeves', to whom I shall return, most of the raw material of Mr. Wodehouse's later novels is embodied in these early books, ready to be refined, co-ordinated and finally worked into a finished state.

An interesting confirmation of this is to be found in the growth of what may be termed the 'Blandings Saga'. In the autumn of 1910 Mr. Wodehouse published two novels—Psmith in the City and A Gentleman of Leisure. Both books are important as precursors of the saga proper, the former as a bridge between the world of school and Mr. Wodehouse's arcadian Shropshire, the latter as a prototype of the Wodehousian house-party.

Ronald Eustace Psmith, whose quaintly sophisticated speech is anticipated, incidentally, in the conversational mannerisms of Marriott in *The Prefect's Uncle*, is the most notable and consistent of Mr. Wodehouse's early characters. He appears for the first time in the second half of *Mike* (reprinted separately in 1935 as *Enter Psmith*)

and is co-hero, with Mike Jackson, of Psmith in the City (based on the author's own experiences as a bank clerk) in which we learn, as Lord Emsworth was afterwards to learn from Psmith himself, that Psmith's family once owned Corfby Hall near Blandings Castle: and of Psmith Journalist (1915), a somewhat jejune novel of New York gangster life, in which Psmith acquires Cost Moments, the type of popular publishing concern that is admirably burlesqued, from what must have been considerable first-hand knowledge, in several later novels and stories. Psmith appears finally, at the top of his form, in Leave it to Psmith (1923), the second and one of the most brilliant instalments of the Blandings Saga proper—the first, Something Fresh, having been published eight years before. Psmith, it will be seen, is thus a significant link in the evolution of the Blandings tradition; and, as if to clinch this link, it should be noted that Mike Jackson ultimately married Phyllis, the stepdaughter by his first wife of Joseph Keeble, whose second wife was the notorious Aunt Constance, châtelaine of Blandings Castle and sister to the Earl of Emsworth.

A Gentleman of Leisure is, critically speaking, more interesting for what it portends than for what it is. It is, as I have said, the prototype of the familiar Wodehousian country house-party, in which peers, gentlemen of independent means, self-made millionaires and shady characters on the prowl are pleasantly and innocently engaged in double-crossing one another and in which, after a series of highly ingenious if improbable peripeteias, everything turns out to be for the best in the best of all impossible worlds. A Gentleman of Leisure is no more than a study for the masterpieces in this kind that Mr. Wodehouse was afterwards to produce. But it is remarkable just because it presents all the main features of later

books: a stately home of England and, more particularly, of Shropshire (Dreever Castle); an amiable but fat-headed young peer, Hildebrand Spencer Poyns de Burgh John Hanneyside Coombe-Crombie, 12th Earl of Dreever,1 the first of a long and eminently feckless line of 'Drones'; a chain-store tycoon (Sir Thomas Blunt of Blunt's Stores); a termagant aunt, the first of a formidable breed; a man-about-town and a pretty nitwit American girl; a butler and a bad lot. It is, in fact, an early sketch, the main outlines filled in but the drawing still a little uncertain, for one of the great historical canvases of Blandings Castle. A Damsel in Distress (1919), which records rare goings-on among a similar set at Belpher Castle, Hants., under the benevolent if somewhat myopic eye of the 7th Earl of Marshmoreton is, though lacking in 'high ridiculousness', an even more advanced study. For here there are resemblances of fact as well as of manner to the Blandings tradition. Lord Marshmoreton, for example, is, like Lord Emsworth, a passionate if unorthodox gardener; in both castles there is a valuable portrait of a former countess in the great hall; and in the passages of formal, descriptive writing, at which Mr. Wodehouse has always excelled, there are marked similarities between Belpher and Blandings. This novel, it is true, stands chronologically between Something Fresh and Leave it to Psmith; yet its relationship to the Blandings saga is not the less significant on this account. It should be regarded, I think, as an interim essay in the grand manner that was to flower in Summer Lightning (1929) and was presumably written to keep the author's hand in.

For, during the eight years that separate Something

¹ 'Peers Created by Mr. P.G. Wodehouse' would make an imposing Appendix to *The Complete Peerage*. It is to be regretted that the late Mr. Vicary Gibbs did not apply his wit and learning to this interesting task.

Fresh and Leave it to Psmith Mr. Wodehouse was busy with other work. In the first half of this period, which coincided with the Four Years' War, he was living in New York—a fact that cannot be left out of account in any estimate of how far the 'escapism' of Mr. Wodehouse's novels is related to a psychological need to avoid or suppress in his own life the unpleasant realities and obligations of the contemporary world.1 (It is not irrelevant here to observe that Mr. Wodehouse made his home during the sad interim between two great wars either in Hollywood or at Le Touquet-the chosen haunts of many wealthy, irresponsible playboys of the Western World.) The effects of this prolonged residence are apparent in the subject-matter and the style of the novels and short stories produced between 1915 and 1920. New York life and New York colloquialisms figure largely in both and with varying degrees of success. In these early American studies, at least, and even in those of Mr. Wodehouse's ripest years, the dramatis personae are flat and unconvincing because they tend to be English puppets dolled up in American dress and made to spout a kind of stylised Americanese. In order to make the best of both his reading publics and to please both, Mr. Wodehouse has frequently managed to compromise, either by making the heroes of his American settings English (e.g. Piccadilly Iim, Archie ('Indiscretions') Moffam and, of course, Bertie Wooster) or some of the leading characters of his English settings American (e.g. George Bevan, Sam Shotter, and, of course, the ubiquitous millionaire with a daughter to marry into the English peerage). But it

¹ This paper was in proof before it was reported that Mr. Wodehouse had sacrificed his honourable status as a prisoner of war in Germany in order to co-operate, in easy circumstances, with Dr. Goebbels. Until the facts of this deplorable dereliction are fully known, it would be charitable to suspend final judgment.

is fair criticism, I think, to say that Mr. Wodehouse seldom if ever gives the impression of being quite at home in Manhattan or even in Los Angeles. If this is true of earlier books like Piccadilly Jim (1917) (the sequel of The Little Nugget), The Coming of Bill (1920), or Jill the Reckless (New York 1920), it is hardly less true, allowing for experience gained, of later ones like Laughing Gas, the short sketches of Hollywood life—the 'elsewhere' of Blandings Castle and Elsewhere (1935)—or some of Mr Mulliner's American tall stories.

Far more important, however, than any of these contributions to the gaiety of nations at war was the conception at this time of Jeeves, the omniscient but otherwise impeccable gentleman's personal gentleman—the greatest of all Wodehousian characters. The genesis of Jeeves cannot be determined with any certainty, though the following piece of unpublished evidence, plausible if unproven, hints at his origin. In an early dramatic sketch entitled After the Show, which Mr. Wodehouse wrote in collaboration with Herbert Westbrook some years before Jeeves turned up—the typescript I have read is undated—there is a slight but suggestive resemblance between Barlow, manservant to the Hon. Aubrey Forde-Rasche of the Albany, and Jeeves, notably in a sharp 'scene' over 'our cravats'. There is some reason to suppose that Mr. Westbrook gave his coadjutor the idea for Barlow and that Barlow, if not the archetype of Jeeves, is at least his precursor. At all events, After the Show is the first piece on record in which a character of a recognisably Jeevesian type figures.

Jeeves himself did not make his first discreet bow to the world until 1917. This was on page 25 of a collection of thirteen short stories entitled *The Man with Two Left* Feet, and on the opening page of the first recorded chapter of accidents involving Bertie Wooster and his terrific Aunt Agatha—an isolated story called 'Extricating Young Gussie'. He appeared for a moment only to deliver the awful and prophetic message: 'Mrs. Gregson to see you, sir' and then vanish again for another two years.

'It was only some time later', Mr. Wodehouse explains in his Introduction to The Jeeves Omnibus (1931), 'when I was going into the strange affair which is related under the title of "The Artistic Career of Young Corky" that the man's qualities dawned on me. I still blush', he adds, 'to think of the off-hand way I treated him at our first encounter'. The story in question (originally called 'Leave it to Jeeves'), a continuation of Bertie Wooster's adventures in New York, as related in 'Extricating Young Gussie', was the first of three further instalments of what was to develop into the famous Jeeves-Wooster saga and was published in the early summer of 1919 in the volume entitled My Man Jeeves. This little book, printed on miserable war-time pulp, and published by Newnes at 9d. in cheap red cloth boards, is a landmark in the Wodehouse canon and now, incidentally, a very rare item, unobtainable even at the British Museum. It marks the original appearance in book form of the first genuine stories about Jeeves and the young master. It contains eight stories in all—four of them nondescript tales about young gentlemen in tight corners, which are in the nature of preliminary studies for four typical Jeeves-Wooster tales: 'Leave it to Jeeves'; 'Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest'; 'Ieeves and the Hard-boiled Egg'; and 'The Aunt and the Sluggard'.

From these four slight sketches was to spring a saga, as sustained and as memorable as the saga of Blandings

and the Emsworths. It will probably continue to be a matter for friendly and indecisive dispute which of the two is the finer achievement. In substance as well as in manner both are remarkably uniform, the successive instalments of each conforming strictly to type. It could be claimed that the unities of time and space are, in a sense, more rigorously observed in the drama of life at Blandings Castle; but the unities of action and character are no less strictly maintained in the fantastic 'imbrolligos' or argle-bargles in which Wooster and his valet are involved. Both, in fact, are variant interpretations of a single fanciful world; and, although Mr. Wodehouse has always been careful, it would seem, not to confuse them, they are not wholly unrelated, for a certain Algernon Wooster is mentioned in Something Fresh as a cousin of the Hon. Freddie Threepwood, Lord Emsworth's improvident younger son, and Bertie Wooster himself is said to have stayed at Blandings Castle, which he must have heard about in any case from his Aunt Dahlia who lived at Brinkley Court, near Market Snodsbury, Worcs., the unforgettable setting of Right Ho, Jeeves (1934).

Bertie Wooster is only to be distinguished from any other member of 'The Drones Club' by the wider range of his recorded activities and by his dependence upon Jeeves. The 'drone' as a type of good-natured, irresponsible young man-about-town is common to almost all Mr. Wodehouse's novels and short stories and not only to those specifically concerned with life at Blandings or in Wooster's flat in Berkeley Chambers. The boulevardier as hero is found as early as Psmith and as late as Young Men in Spats (1936)—a florilegium of dronish anecdotes—and is recognisable even in Mr. Mulliner's genial reminiscences and the vapourings of 'the oldest

member' at the nineteenth hole in the golfing stories. He is the exponent and interpreter of Mr. Wodehouse's simple philosophy of life, which is a harmless compound of the exhortation 'Fay ce que vouldras' over the entrance to the Abbaye de Thélème, and 'Faites vos Jeux', (if this advice may be broadly translated as 'Now for Fun and Games')—with the important reservation, which the doctrinaire sentimentalist in Mr. Wodehouse has always observed, that sex must never be permitted to rear its ugly head and that love can be fed and watered indefinitely—in some of the novels a shade too frequently—on the tender rapture of kisses snatched in the rosegarden by moonlight and a few wistful tears shed provocatively in moments of crisis on a manly shoulder.

Jeeves, on the other hand, is a unique personage, without a peer either in the Upper-Servants' Halls of the Stately Homes of Mr. Wodehouse's England or among the numerous butlers and gentlemen's personal gentlemen who make their sober exits and entrances in other places. To do him justice, he would require an essay to himself; and such an essay would need to examine not only his marked intelligence and the vagaries of his æsthetic sensibility, but also his disposition to be pedantic, even bigoted, not to mention such formative influences as his social life below stairs, his predilection for racing and shrimping and his amours. There is no need to emphasise the importance of the part he has played in his private pantry (or lair) since he was first engaged by his young master. For, as I have said, he was to provide Mr. Wodehouse with a formula, as valuable and as effective as his own matchless pick-me-up, for another saga.

Between them, Jeeves and the Shropshire lads and lassies of Blandings have supplied Mr. Wodehouse with

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a basis for two continuing series of novels and short stories, which have appeared at regular intervals during the past twenty years or more and which are now so familiar that it is unnecessary to catalogue their titles here. Nor is it necessary or even desirable to mention in the same context as these masterpieces the various trivial fictions tossed off during the same period with a facility that has sometimes defeated itself, and perhaps made a discriminating reader wonder if their author's generally vigilant self-criticism is always as conscientious as it should be, and if more intelligent criticism from his admirers might not have done him a service. But even a discursive survey of Mr. Wodehouse's work outside the two great series would be incomplete if it omitted any mention of the farcical golfing stories—The Clicking of Cuthbert (1922) and The Heart of a Goof (1926)—which even a non-golfer can enjoy; the too-little and toolately known Ukridge (Ukridge, 1924), the most genial of all Mr. Wodehouse's high-grade defectives; or the three volumes of Mr. Mulliner's family case-histories— Meet Mr. Mulliner (1927); Mr. Mulliner Speaking (1929); Mulliner Nights (1933)—in which Mr. Wodehouse's gift as a raconteur in the first person reveals itself in its most artistic and urbane form.

If and when a judicious critic is found to give all these books the serious attention they deserve—a critic who would study not only the books themselves but their inter-relationships—a number of points will require special attention. By way of conclusion, I should like to indicate briefly a few profitable lines of research. In the first place, Mr. Wodehouse's sources. For the school stories, it is clear that Mr. Wodehouse drew on his own experiences at Dulwich, where, I am authoritatively informed, he was a thorn in the flesh of a future Pro-

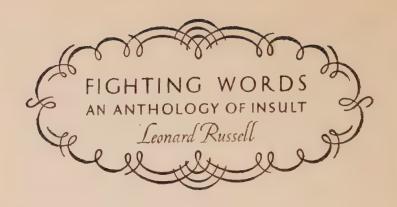
fessor of French at Cambridge, who considered him as altogether inferior in wits and application to his brother. A further profitable source was undoubtedly his friend King Hall's private school at Emsworth in Hampshire, where he was a frequent and popular visitor before his marriage in 1914 and where, it may be assumed, he had ample opportunity for studying the impossible child a comic type that recurs in several books, early as well as late. The sources of the Wodehousian aristocratic tradition are more obscure. It may be relevant, in this connection, to recall that Mr. Wodehouse is a descendant, if not of many royal kings, at least of Anne Boleyn's sister; that he is a kinsman of the Earl of Kimberley; and that it was his custom at one period of his life to take a summer's lease of one of the smaller English country seats.

In the second place, there are certain influences to be considered. The influence of his early career as a journalist has already been noted; from it derive people like Lord Tilbury, the magazine baron, Wooster's Aunt Dahlia Travers, editress of Milady's Boudoir, and organisations like the Mammoth Publishing Co.—characters and concerns common to several novels and short stories. The significance of his American contacts has also been alluded to; the critic would need to explore these in some detail and particularly in connection with the Americanisms that have contributed much to the raciness of his dialogue. It is desirable, too, that Mr. Wodehouse's long and never wholly successful flirtation with the theatre should be taken into account. He has collaborated, though rarely with anything approaching the success he has aimed at, in numerous musical comedies and stage as well as screen adaptations of his novels. Indeed, his predilection for the theatre and his

affection for the profession are expressed in the majority of his books. Not only do actors, actresses and young ladies of the chorus figure largely in them, but, even more, it could be maintained that the values and characteristics of the Wodehousian world resemble most closely those of the never-never-land of romantic musical comedy, where youth is always at the helm and pleasure at the prow, where the sun shines with the constancy and brilliance of footlights and all the complexities raised by mistaken identity, cross-purposes and faux pas committed with the best intention are invariably resolved with the final curtain falling upon virtue triumphant and an enjoyable time being had by one and all.

Besides these sources and influences, there are other aspects of the Master's work that merit attention from the enquiring critic. For example, his vocabulary and the literature from which it derives; the aptness of his quotations; his fertile invention of neologisms and ingenious use of slang or figures of speech; and, not least, the almost unvarying excellence and neatness of his intrigues. Finally, a thorough analysis of Mr. Wodehouse's types and 'humours' would be incomplete without some recognition of his limitations as a psychologist and of the relatively narrow range of his characters' intellectual and emotional perceptions and reactions. 'Of certain supreme moments in life', Mr. Wodehouse observed in Sam the Sudden, 'it is not easy to write. The workaday teller of tales, whose gifts, if any, lie rather in the direction of recording events than of analysing emotion, finds himself baffled by them.' The statement is revealing, although it appears in a humorous context: and yet, true as it may be, no one, not even, it may be hoped, the potential critic or aspiring Ph.D., into whose fearful embrace I have been, perhaps, too ready to

commit Mr. Wodehouse and all his works, would wish him to be other than he is—or was before he was tempted to take the path that is paved with primroses and good intentions—a workaday teller of tales and the recorder of events in the life of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster, Lord Emsworth and Aunt Constance, Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge and Mr. Mulliner's countless relations.



HE ART OF insult, like port-drinking and driving four-in-hand, is one of the lost English arts. It had its golden age in the eighteenth century, its silver age in the early In the last decades of the Victorian age it fell into a decline, and when the world was hailing the dawn of a new era of peace and progress it died in the gutter. Visitors to these shores were puzzled by our passionate love of the art. As late as 1854 we find a European monarch writing to Queen Victoria: 'Abuse is somewhat the staff of life in England, everything, everybody is to be abused.' And round about the same time a German rushes home to report to his countrymen that England is one big libel. There they were, these English, abusing each other like pickpockets and with every appearance of enjoyment: free speech they were pleased to call it! At least he was right about the enjoyment; for the great Augustan masters of the insult had established a tradition of ferocious pleasure in practising their art which was perpetuated by the Lockharts, the Maginns, the Giffords and all the other Drawcansirs of the first half of the

nineteenth century. To be sure, there was a good deal of scoundrelism about these bravos, but at this remove we may be excused from becoming indignant even at *Blackwood's* abominable treatment of Keats. It is, as Carlyle would say when he had been more than usually odious to his wife, the nature of the beast.

The great pages of the literature of insult have been frequently reprinted, and from the small anthology which follows many passages that I judge to be too familiar have been excluded. Thus the poetry of Pope is absent, and Dr. Johnson's blunderbuss makes no appearance. Generally speaking, informal and anecdotal occasions of malice have been given preference over vituperation in the grand manner.

CROMWELL

Lord Bolingbroke used to relate, that his great grand-father Ireton, and Fleetwood, being one day engaged in a private drinking party with Cromwell, and wanting to uncork a bottle, they could not find their bottle-screw, which was fallen under the table. Just at that instant, an officer entered to inform the Protector, that a deputation from the Presbyterian ministers attended without. 'Tell them' (says Cromwell, with a countenance instantly composed) 'that I am retired, that I cannot be disturbed, for I am seeking the Lord;' and turning afterwards to his companions, he added, 'These scoundrels think we are seeking the Lord, and we are only looking for our bottle-screw.'

WARTON Essay on Pope

PITIFULLEST CREATURES

Of all people Ladies have no reason to cry down Ceremony, for they take themselves slighted without it. And were they not used with Ceremony, with Compliments and Addresses, with Legs and Kissing of Hands, they were the pitifullest Creatures in the World. . . .

'Tis reason a Man that will have a Wife should be at the Charge of her Trinkets, and pay all the Scores she sets on him. He that will keep a Monkey 'tis fit he

should pay for the Glasses he breaks.

SELDEN Table-Talk

PUDDLE AND PEPPER

PRINCE RUPERT'S Dog: What yelping whindling Puppy Dog art thou?

Tobie's Dog: What bauling Shag-haird Cavalliers Dogge art thou?

PR. Rup. Dog: Thou art a dogged sir or Cur, grumble no more, but tell me thy name.

Tob. Dog: I was called Tobies house-dog, the dog which Walker the Iron-monger so often commends for a mannerly and well-bred Dog in his severall Tub-lectures: my name is Pepper.

PR. Rup. Dog: Though your zeal be never so hot, you shall not bite me, Pepper.

Tob. Dog: Ile bark before I bite, and talke before I fight, I heare you are Prince Rupert's white Boy.

PR. RUP. Dog: I am none of his white Boy, my name is Puddle.

Tob. Dog: A dirty name indeed, you are not pure enough for my company.

PR. Rup. Dog: And thou art a Round-headed puppy, a foolish, snarling Cur. Dost thou presume to confront me with thy ignorant spirit and prick ears?

Tob. Dog: Thou art a profane Annimall; Tobies dog is of a better, and more reformed condition.

PR. Rup. Dog: A halter would reforme thee exceeding well; for thou art a cur that wilt barke against all people, nay, thou art a rebellious dog, and wilt barke against the King.

Tob. Dog: Puddle, Come not neer me; for I can grin and bite, and that boldly, though thou look like a Lyon with long shag haire, yet I fear thee not, bragging Courtier, thou Popish profane Dog. . . .

A Dialogue or Rather a Parley between Prince Rupert's Dog whose name is Puddle, and Tobie's Dog whose Name is Pepper, 1643.

JUDGE JEFFERIES IMPROVES THE OCCASION

I hope, gentlemen of the jury, you take notice of the strange and horrible carriage of this fellow; and withal, you cannot but observe the spirit of that sort of people, what a villainous and devilish one it is: good God! that ever the thing called religion (a word that people have so much abused) should ever wind up persons to such a height of impiety, that it should make them lose the belief that there is a God of truth in Heaven, that sees and knows, observes and registers, and will punish and take vengeance of falshood and perjury. It may well make the rest of mankind, that

have any sort of faith in a Deity and a future life, to abhor and detest both the men and their religion, if such abominable principles may be called so. A Turk is a saint to such a fellow as this, nay a Pagan would be ashamed to be thought to have no more truth in him. O blessed Jesus! What an age do we live in, and what a generation of vipers do we live among? Sirs, Is this that you call the Protestant religion! Shall so glorious a name be applied to so much villany and hypocrisy? Is this the pursuasion you hope to live, and die, and find salvation in? Will any of you all, gentlemen, be contented to die with a lye in your mouth? Do not you all expect, according to the orthodox doctrine of the true Church of England, that eternal damnation will be the portion of lyars? And thou wicked wretch, how durst thou appear to give testimony before even an earthly tribunal with so much impudence and falshood, when every lye will cost thee so dear, except a sincere and hearty repentance, and the infinite mercy of the great God interpose?

Trial of Alice Lisle, 1685

THE LEARNED CLERGY

All confess there never was a more learned Clergy; no Man taxes them with Ignorance. But to talk of that, is like the fellow that was a great Wencher; he wish'd God would forgive him his Lechery, and lay Usury to his Charge. The Clergy have worse Faults.

SELDEN
Table-Talk

Suspicious Dryden

Even Dryden was very suspicious of Rivals. He would compliment Crown, when a play of his failed, but was cold to him if he met with success.—He used sometimes to own that Crown had some genius; but then added, 'that his father and Crown's mother were very well acquainted.'

OLD JACOB TONSON Spence's Anecdotes

DIRTY SHEETS

No fouler pen than Swift's has soiled our literature. His language is horrible from first to last. He is full of odious images, of base and abominable allusions. It would be a labour of Hercules to cleanse his pages. His love-letters are defaced by his incurable coarseness. This habit of his is so inveterate that it seems a miracle he kept his sermons free from his blackguard phrases. It is a question not of morality, but of decency, whether it is becoming to sit in the same room with the works of this divine. How the good Sir Walter ever managed to see him through the press is amazing. In this matter Swift is inexcusable.

Then his unfeeling temper, his domineering brutality—the tears he drew, the discomfort he occasioned.

'Swift, dining at a house, where the part of the tablecloth which was next him happened to have a small hole, tore it as wide as he could, and ate his soup through it; his reason for such behaviour was, as he said, to mortify the lady of the house, and to teach her to pay a proper attention to housewifery.'

One is glad to know he sometimes met his match. He slept one night at an inn kept by a widow lady of very respectable family, Mrs. Seneca, of Drogheda. In the morning he made a violent complaint of the sheets being dirty. 'Dirty, indeed!' exclaimed Mrs. Seneca; 'you are the last man, doctor, that should complain of dirty sheets.' And so, indeed, he was, for he had just published the Lady's Dressing-room, a very dirty sheet indeed.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL Men, Women & Books

POPE AND LORD HALIFAX

The famous Lord Hallifax (though so much talked of) was rather a pretender to taste, than really possessed of it.—When I had finished the two or three first books of my translation of the Iliad, that lord, 'desired to have the pleasure of hearing them read at his house.'-Addison, Congreve, and Garth, were there at the reading.—In four or five places, Lord Hallifax stopped me very civilly; and with a speech, each time much of the same kind: 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Pope, but there is something in that passage that does not quite please me.—Be so good as to mark the place, and consider it a little more at your leisure.—I am sure you can give it a better turn.'—I returned from Lord Hallifax's with Dr. Garth, in his chariot; and as we were going along, was saying to the doctor, that my lord had laid me under a good deal of difficulty, by such loose and general observations. . . . Garth laughed heartily at my embarrassment; said, I had not been long enough acquainted with Lord Hallifax, to know his way vet:

that I need not puzzle myself in looking those places over and over when I got home. 'All you need do (said he), is to leave them just as they are; call on Lord Hallifax two or three months hence, thank him for his kind observations on those passages; and then read them to him as altered. I have known him much longer than you have, and will be answerable for the event.' I followed his advice; waited on Lord Hallifax some time after: said, I hoped he would find his objections to those passages removed, read them to him exactly as they were at first; his lordship was extremely pleased with them, and cried out, 'Ay now, Mr. Pope, they are perfectly right! nothing can be better'.

POPE Spence's Anecdotes

FIEND IN HUMAN SHAPE

Here continueth to rot
The body of Francis Charteris,
Who, with an Inflexible Constancy
and

Inimitable Uniformity of Life Persisted

In spite of Age and Infirmities
In the practice of Every Human Vice,
Excepting Prodigality and Hypocrisy:

His insatiable Avarice exempted him from the first, His matchless Impudence from the second.

Nor was he more singular
In the undeviating pravity of his manners
Than successful
in accumulating Wealth;

For, without Trade or Profession,
Without Trust of Public Money,
And without Bribe-worthy service,
He acquired, or more properly created,
A Ministerial Estate.

He was the only person of his time Who could *Cheat* without the mask of *Honesty*,

Retain his primeval Meanness

When possessed of Ten Thousand a year,

And having daily deserved the Gibbet for what he did, Was at last condemned to it for what he could not do.1

Oh, indignant reader!

Think not his life useless to mankind! Providence connived at his execrable designs,

To give to after ages

A conspicuous Proof and Example

Of how small estimation is Exorbitant Wealth

In the sight of God

By His bestowing it upon the Most Unworthy of all Mortals.

JOHN ARBUTHNOT (1667-1735)

GEORGE II

On the Charms of a Bishop

'A pretty fellow for a friend!' said the King, turning to Lord Hervey. 'Pray what is it that charms you in him? His pretty limping gait' (and then he acted the Bishop's lameness) 'or his nasty stinking breath?—phaugh!—or his silly laugh, when he grins in your face

Colonel Charteris, at the age of fifty-five, was tried for rape and sentenced to death, but managed to secure a pardon.

for nothing, and shows his nasty rotten teeth? Or is it his great honesty that charms your Lordship?... My Lord, I am very sorry you choose your friends so ill; but I cannot help saying, if the Bishop of Winchester is your friend, you have a great puppy and a very dull fellow and a great rascal for your friend.'...

LORD HERVEY

Memoirs

On Frederick Prince of Wales

The King and Queen were full as well pleased with giving Lord Hervey this commission to call their son a liar in print, as he was to receive it, and charged him not to embellish the fool's letters in the translation, or to mend the spelling in the original. Lord Hervey took occasion upon this subject, among many other things, to say, he did not believe there ever was a father and a son so thoroughly unlike in every particular as the King and the Prince. . . . The King said he had really thought so himself a thousand times, and had often asked the Queen if the beast was his son. Lord Hervey said that question must be to very little purpose, for to be sure the Queen would never own it if he was not. The King said the first child generally was the husband's, 'and therefore,' says he, 'I fancy he is what in German we call a Weckselbalch; I do not know,' continued he, 'if you have a word for it in English: it is not what you call a foundling, but a child put in a cradle instead of another.' 'That is a changeling,' replied Lord Hervey. The King was extremely pleased with this translation, and said 'I wish you could prove him a changeling in the German sense of the word as easily as anybody can prove him so in the other. . . .'

Lord Hervey said the Queen had often last year done the honours of his Royal Highness's understanding to him, and was very loth to give it quite up, but that of late he had not perceived she had any hope left of disguising it. 'My dear Lord,' replied the Queen, 'I will give it you under my hand, if you are in any fear of my relapsing, that my dear first-born is the greatest ass and the greatest liar, and the greatest canaille, and the greatest beast in the whole world, and that I most heartily wish he was out of it.'

Ibid.

On Chesterfield

Chesterfield is a little tea-table scoundrel, that tells little womanish lies to make quarrels in families; and tries to make women lose their reputations, and make their husbands beat them, without any object but to give himself airs; as if anybody could believe a woman could like a dwarf-baboon.

Ibid.

POOR FRED

Two men were heard lamenting the death [of Frederick Prince of Wales] in Leicester-fields: one said, 'He has left a great many small children!'—'Ay,' replied the other, 'and what is worse, they belong to our parish!' But the most extraordinary reflections on his death were set forth in a sermon at Mayfair chapel. 'He had no great parts (pray mind, this was the parson said so, not I), but he had great virtues; indeed, they degener-

ated into vices: he was very generous, but I hear his generosity has ruined a great many people: and then his condescension was such, that he kept very bad company.'

HORACE WALPOLE, 1751

MUSCULAR CHRISTIAN

A Dr. Suckling, who married a niece of my father, quarrelled with a country squire, who said, 'Doctor, your gown is your protection.'—'Is it so?' replied the parson: 'but, by God! it shall not be yours'; pulled it off, and thrashed him—I was going to say damnably, at least, divinely.

Ibid., 1753

THE MERRIEST MAN

A dull dramatic writer, who had often felt the severity of the public, was complaining one day to Foote of the injustice done him by the critics, but added: 'I have, however, one way of being even with them, which is by constantly laughing at all they say.' 'You do perfectly right, my friend,' said Foote, 'for by this method you will not only disappoint your enemies, but lead the merriest life of any man in England.'

PERCY FITZGERALD

Samuel Foote

CC 401

MACKLIN AND QUIN

There is an anecdote which Macklin¹ has often related . . . we present it to our readers, nearly in the words of the old gentleman, as he told it, in the year 1787, at the Rainbow Coffee-house, in King-street, Coventgarden, to an acquaintance, who asked him-if Quin and he had ever quarrelled? Many persons, in the adjoining boxes, attended to the veteran, who spoke, as usual, in a very audible voice . . . 'When I came off the stage, the surly fellow, who played the scolding Captain in the play, Captain—Captain—you know who I mean'-'Manly, I believe, Sir?'- 'Aye, Sir-the same-Manly. Well, Sir, the surly fellow began to scold me, told me I was at my damned tricks; and there was no having a chaste scene for me.-Every body, nay, egad, the manager himself, was afraid of him.-I was afraid of the fellow, too; but not much.-Well, Sir, I told him, that I did not mean to disturb him by my acting; but to shew off a little myself. Well, Sir, in the other scenes I did the same, and made the audience laugh incontinently-and he scolded me again, Sir.-I made the same apology; but the surly fellow would not be appeased. Again, Sir, however, I did the same; and when I returned to the green-room, he abused me like a pickpocket, and said, I must leave off my damned tricks.—I told him I could not play otherwise. He said. I could, and I should. Upon which, Sir, egad, I said to him flatly-"you lie." He was chewing an apple at this moment; and, spitting the contents into his hand, he

¹ On the stage Macklin had three pauses—medium, longer, and 'my grand pause.' This last was so long held on one occasion that the prompter repeatedly gave him his cue. The actor rushed from the stage and knocked the poor prompter down—'the fellow interrupted me in my grand pause!' Macklin had killed a fellow-actor in a green-room brawl about a wig.

threw them in my face.'—'Indeed!'—'It is fact, Sir!—Well, Sir, I went up to him directly (for I was a great boxing cull in those days), and pushed him down into a chair, and pummelled his face damnably. . . .'

J. T. KIRKMAN
Memoirs of the Life of Charles Macklin, 1799

BOSWELL'S VILE PERFORMANCE

Sastres, an Italian, mentioned by Boswell in his Life of Johnson, was at the fruit shop. I asked him if he knew Boswell. The name excited his indignation; he spoke of Boswell as a proud, pompous, and selfish blockhead. who obtruded himself upon every one, and by his impudent anxiety lost what would otherwise have been willingly granted. As an instance, Johnson did not once mention him in his will, after their pretended intimate and sincere friendship; while S. himself had that honour. This account did but confirm the internal evidence of Boswell's own book. Notwithstanding Johnson's professions, which were but efforts to be kind to him, I think it impossible he should either feel esteem or affection for such a man. . . . Finished Boswell's Life of Johnson: the author still continuing a pompous egotist, servile, selfish, and cunning. . . . As a piece of biography, it is a vile performance; but as a collection of materials, it is a mine.

THOMAS HOLCROFT

Memoirs

THE MISER ELWES

To Mr. Elwes, an inn upon the road, and an apothecary's bill, were equal subjects of aversion. The words 'give' and 'pay' were not found in his vocabulary; and therefore when he once received a very dangerous kick from one of his horses, who fell in going over a leap, nothing could persuade him to have any assistance. He rode the chace through, with his leg cut to the bone; and it was only some days afterwards, when it was feared an amputation would be necessary, that he consented to go up to London, and, hard day! part with some money for advice.

No hounds were more killing ones than those of Mr. Elwes. The wits of the country used to say, 'it must be

so, or they would get nothing to eat.' . . .

When Mr. Elwes was at Marcham, two very ancient maiden ladies, in his neighbourhood, had, for some neglect, incurred the displeasure of the spiritual court, and were threatened with immediate 'excommunication'... away they hurried to Mr. Elwes, to know how they could make submission, and how the sentence might be prevented. No time was to be lost. Mr. Elwes did that which, fairly speaking, not one man in five thousand would have done; he had his horse saddled, and putting, according to usual custom, a couple of hard eggs in his pocket, he set out for London that evening, and reached it early enough the next morning to notify the submission of the culprit damsels. . . .

The ladies were so overjoyed—so thankful: So much trouble and expence!—What returns could they make? To ease their consciences on this head, an old Irish gentleman, their neighbour, who knew Mr. Elwes's mode of travelling, wrote these words—'My Dears, is it

expence you are talking of? send him six-pence, and he gains two-pence by the journey.'

EDWARD TOPHAM Life of the Late John Elwes, 1790

NOLLEKENS AND THE NUTMEGS

Mr. Nollekens for many years made one at the table of what was at that time called the Royal Academy Club; and so strongly was he bent upon saving all he could privately conceal, that he did not mind paying two guineas a year for his admission ticket, in order to indulge himself with a few nutmegs, which he contrived to pocket privately; for as red-wine negus was the principal beverage, nutmegs were used. Now it generally happened if another bowl was wanted, that the nutmegs were missing. Nollekens, who had frequently been seen to pocket them, was one day requested by Rossi, the Sculptor, to see if they had not fallen under the table; upon which Nollekens actually went crawling beneath upon his hands and knees, pretending to look for them, though at that very time they were in his waistcoat pocket. He was so old a stager at this monopoly of nutmegs, that he would sometimes engage the maker of the negus in conversation, looking at him full in the face, whilst he slyly and unobserved, as he thought, conveyed away the spice: like the fellow who is stealing the bank note from the blind man in that admirable print of the Royal Cock-pit, by Hogarth.

JOHN THOMAS SMITH
Nollekens and His Times

BLAKE'S TRIAL FOR SEDITION

[When William Blake was living at Felpham in 1803, a drunken soldier one summer day broke into his little garden, and refused to leave. The fellow said he was the king's soldier and so on. 'Damn the king, and you too,' replied Blake, and ejected him. In revenge, the soldier and a comrade manufactured a story and swore before a magistrate that Blake had been guilty of seditious language. He was tried and acquitted at the next Quarter Sessions.]

The Information of John Scofield

The Information and Complaint of John Scofield, a Private Soldier in His Majesty's First Regiment of Dragoons, taken upon his Oath, this 15th Day of August, 1803. . . .

Who saith, that on the twelfth Day of this Instant August, at the Parish of Felpham, one — Blake, a Miniature Painter, and now residing in the said Parish of Felpham, did utter the following seditious expressions, viz.: that we (meaning the People of England) were like a Parcel of Children, that they would play with themselves till they got scalded and burnt, that the French knew our Strength very well, and if Bonaparte should come he would be master of Europe in an Hour's Time, that England might depend upon it, that when he set his Foot on English Ground that every Englishman would have his choice, whether to have his Throat cut, or to join the French, and that he was a strong Man, and would certainly begin to cut Throats, and the strongest Man must conquer—that he damned the King of England—his country, and his subjects, that his Soldiers were all bound for Slaves. . . .

Blake's Refutation of the Information

The Soldier has been heard to say repeatedly, that he did not know how the Quarrel began, which he would not say if such seditious words were spoken. . . .

The Soldier's Comrade swore before the Magistrates, while I was present, that he had heard me utter seditious words, at the Stable Door, and in particular, said, that he heard me D—n the K—g. Now I have all the Persons who were present at the Stable Door to witness that no word relating to Seditious Subjects was uttered, either by one Party or the other, and they are ready on their Oaths, to say that I did not utter such Words. If we prove the Comrade perjured who swore that he heard me D—n the K—g, I believe the whole Charge falls to the Ground. . . . If such a Perjury as this can take effect, any Villain in future may come and drag me and my Wife out of our House, and beat us in the Garden, or use us as he please, or is able, and afterwards go and swear our Lives away.

BRUMMELL'S AFTERTHOUGHT

The sufferer was a military man, who had had the misfortune to be severely wounded in the face—in fact, to lose the most prominent feature of it. . . . The Beau was one morning disturbed at his breakfast by a loud knocking at the door; his permission to enter was scarcely given, when the grisly warrior, with indignation in his eyes, and 'satisfaction' in his thoughts, stalked into the room and confronted him. . . . 'The fact is, Mr. Brummell, I have heard that you have been kind enough to spread a report about the

town, affecting my position in society here, by stating that I am not a retired officer, and never held a commission; and that I am really nothing more nor less than a retired hatter.'... [Brummell said] 'I am sorry, very sorry, that anyone should conceive it possible that I could be guilty of such a breach of good manners. I can assure you that there is not a word of truth in the report.' The captain, perfectly satisfied and delighted with his reception, now moved towards the door; when Brummell followed him to it, and, as he was leaving the room, again affirmed that the report was false: 'For,' said he, 'now I think of it, I never in my life dealt with a hatter without a nose.'

CAPTAIN JESSE
The Life of Beau Brummell

COLERIDGE

Biographia Literaria

Mr. Coleridge will read no books that other people read; his scorn is as misplaced and extravagant as his admiration; opinions that seem to tally with his own wild ravings are holy and inspired; and, unless agreeable to his creed, the wisdom of ages is folly; and wits, whom the world worship, dwarfed when they approach his venerable side. His admiration of nature or of man, we had almost said his religious feelings towards his God, are all narrowed, weakened, and corrupted, and poisoned by inveterate and diseased egotism; and instead of his mind reflecting the beauty and glory of nature, he seems to consider the mighty universe itself as nothing better than a mirror in which, with a grinning and idiot self-

complacency, he may contemplate the Physiognomy of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Though he has yet done nothing in any one department of human knowledge, yet he speaks of his theories, and plans, and views, and discoveries, as if he had produced some memorable revolution in Science. He at all times connects his own name in Poetry with Shakespeare, and Spenser, and Milton; in politics with Burke, and Fox, and Pitt: in metaphysics with Locke, and Hartley, and Berkely, and Kant-feeling himself not only to be the worthy compeer of those illustrious Spirits, but to unite, in his own mighty intellect, all the glorious powers and faculties by which they were separately distinguished, as if his soul were endowed with all human power, and was the depository of the aggregate, or rather the essence of all human knowledge. So deplorable a delusion as this, has only been equalled by that of Joanna Southcote, who mistook a complaint in the bowels for the divine afflatus; and believed herself about to give birth to the regenerator of the world, when sick unto death of an incurable and loathsome disease. . . .

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, 1817

On Hazlitt

... Both my health and my circumstances have been such that my powers of volition, constitutionally weak, have sunk utterly under the weight of embarrassments, disappointments, and infamous calumny. For instance, the author of the Articles in the 'Edinburgh Review' and the 'Examiner' (W. Hazlitt) after efforts of friendship on my part which a brother could not have demanded—my House, Purse, Influence—and all this,

tho' his manners were dreadfully repulsive to me, because I was persuaded that he was a young man of great talent and utterly friendless-his very father and mother having despaired of him-after having baffled all these efforts at the very moment, when he had been put in the way of an honourable maintenance, by the most unmanly vices that almost threatened to communicate a portion of their infamy to my family and Southey's and Wordsworth's, in all of which he had been familiarized, and in mine and Southey's domesticated-after having been snatched from an infamous punishment by Southey and myself (there were not less than 2 or [sic] men on horses in search of him)-after having given him all the money I had in the world, and the very shoes off my feet to enable him to escape over the mountains—and since that time never, either of us, injured him in the least degree unless the quiet withdrawing from any further connection with him (and this without any ostentation, or any mask of shyness when we accidentally met him) not merely or chiefly on account of his Keswick conduct, but from the continued depravity of his life-but why need I say more? This man Mr. Jeffrey has sought out, knowing all this, because the wretch is notorious for his avowed hatred to me and affected contempt of Southey. He has repeatedly boasted, that he wrote the very contrary of all he believed—because he was under heavy obligations, and therefore hated me.

COLERIDGE, 1817

POSTSCRIPT TO THE ABOVE

Alas! 'Frailty, thy name is Genius!'—What is become of all this mighty heap of hope, of thought, of learning

and humanity? It has ended in swallowing doses of oblivion and in writing paragraphs in the *Courier*.—Such and so little is the mind of man!

The Spirit of the Age, 1825

LEIGH HUNT

The poetry of Mr. Hunt is such as might be expected from the personal character and habits of its author. As a vulgar man is perpetually labouring to be genteel —in like manner, the poetry of this man is always on the stretch to be grand. . . . The extreme moral depravity of the Cockney School is another thing which is for ever thrusting itself upon the public attention, and convincing every man of sense who looks into their productions, that they who sport such sentiments can never be great poets. How could any man of high original genius ever stoop publicly, at the present day, to dip his fingers in the least of those glittering and rancid obscenities which float on the surface of Mr. Hunt's Hippocrene? His poetry is that of a man who has kept company with kept-mistresses. He talks indelicately like a tea-sipping milliner girl. Some excuse for him there might have been, had he been hurried away by imagination or passion. But with him indecency is a disease, and he speaks unclean things from perfect inanition. The very concubine of so impure a wretch as Leigh Hunt would be to be pitied, but alas! for the wife of such a husband! For him there is no charm in simple seduction; and he gloats over it only when accompanied with adultery and incest.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, 1817

On Southey

I have given it to Master Southey, and he shall have more before I have done with him. I understand the scoundrel said, on his return from Switzerland two years ago, that 'Shelley and I were in a league of Incest, etc., etc.' He is a burning liar! for the women to whom he alludes are not sisters—one being Godwin's daughter, by Mary Wollstonecraft, and the other daughter of the present (second) Mrs. Gⁿ, by a former husband; and in the next place, if they had even been so, there was no promiscuous intercourse whatever.

You may make what I say here as public as you please—more particularly to Southey, whom I look upon, and will say as publicly, to be a dirty, lying rascal; and will prove it in ink—or in his blood, if I did not believe him to be too much of a poet to risk it. If he had forty reviews at his back—as he has the *Quarterly*—I would have at him in his scribbling capacity, now that he has begun with me; but I will do nothing underhand. Tell him what I say from me, and everyone else you please.

You will see what I have said if the parcel arrives safe. I understand *Coleridge* went about repeating Southey's lie with pleasure. I can believe it, for I had done him what is called a favour. I can understand Coleridge's abusing me, but how or why *Southey*—whom I had never obliged in any sort of way, or done him the remotest service—should go about fibbing and calumniating is more than I readily comprehend.

Does he think to put me down with his canting—not being able to do so with his poetry? We will try the question. I have read his review of Hunt, where he has

attacked Shelley in an oblique and shabby manner. Does he know what that review has done? I will tell you. It has sold an edition of the Revolt of Islam, which, otherwise, nobody would have thought of reading, and few who read can understand—I for one. . . . However, let Mr. Southey look to himself—since the wine is tapped, let him drink it.

Letter to John Murray, 1818

On the English

As to the Estimation of the English which you talk of, let them calculate what it is worth, before they insult me with their insolent condescension.

I have not written for their pleasure. If they are pleased, it is that they chose to be so; I have never flattered their opinions, nor their pride; nor will I. Neither will I make 'ladies' books' al dilettar le femine e la plebe. I have written from the fullness of my mind, from passion, from impulse, from many motives, but not for their 'sweet voices.'

I know the precise worth of popular applause, for few scribblers have had more of it; and if I chose to swerve into their paths, I could retain it, or resume it, or increase it. But I neither love ye, nor fear ye; and though I buy with ye and sell with ye, and talk with ye, I will neither eat with ye, drink with ye, nor pray with ye. They made me, without my search, a species of popular Idol; they, without reason or judgement, beyond the caprice of their good pleasure, threw down the Image from its pedestal; it was not broken with the fall, and they would, it seems, again replace it—but they shall not.

Letter to John Murray, 1819

POSTSCRIPT TO THE ABOVE

So we have lost another Poet. I never much relished his Lordship's mind, and shall be sorry if the Greeks have cause to miss him. He was to me offensive, and I never can make out his great power, which his admirers talk of. Why, a line of Wordsworth's is a lever to lift the immortal spirit! Byron can only move the Spleen. He was at best a Satyrist,—in any other way he was mean enough. I dare say I do him injustice; but I cannot love him, nor squeeze a tear to his memory.

LAMB
Letter to Barton, 1824

SILENCED

We travelled with one of those troublesome fellowpassengers in a stage-coach, that is called a well-informed man. For twenty miles we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriages by ditto, till all my science, and more than all, was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my torment by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishops Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me: 'What sort of a crop of turnips I thought we should have this year?' Emma's eyes turned to me, to know what in the world I could have to say; and she burst into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale, serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied, that 'it depended, I believed, upon boiled legs of mutton.' This clench'd our conversation; and my Gentleman, with a face half wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the remainder of the journey.

LAMB Letter to Sarah Hazlitt, 1830

Just So

No, I don't like Lamb. You see, Canon Ainger writes about him, and Canon Ainger goes to tea with my sisters.

SAMUEL BUTLER

RETAINER TO THE MUSES

Mr. Gifford was originally bred to some handicraft: he afterwards contrived to learn Latin, and was for some time an usher in a school, till he became a tutor in a nobleman's family. The low-bred, self-taught man, the pedant, and the dependent on the great, contribute to form the Editor of the Quarterly Review. He is admirably qualified for this situation, which he has held for some years, by a happy combination of defects, natural and acquired; and in the event of his death it will be difficult to provide him with a suitable successor. . . .

He stands over a contemporary performance with all the self-conceit and self-importance of a country schoolmaster, tries it by technical rules, affects not to understand the meaning, examines the hand-writing, the spelling, shrugs up his shoulders and chuckles over a slip of the pen, and keeps a sharp look-out for a false concord and—a flogging. There is nothing liberal, nothing humane in his style of judging: it is altogether

petty, captious, and literal. The Editor's political subserviency adds the last finishing to his ridiculous pedantry and vanity. He has all his life been a follower in the train of wealth and power—strives to back his pretensions on Parnassus by a place at court, and to gild his reputation as a man of letters by the smile of greatness. He thinks his works are stamped with additional value by having his name in the Red-Book. He looks up to the distinctions of rank and station as he does to those of learning, with the gross and over-weening adulation of his early origin. All his notions are low, upstart, servile. He thinks it the greatest honour to a poet to be patronised by a peer or by some dowager of quality. He is prouder of a court-livery than of a laurel-wreath, and is only sure of having established his claims to respectability by having sacrificed those of independence. He is a retainer to the Muses, a door-keeper to learning, a lacquey in the State.

HAZLITT
The Spirit of the Age

WELL SITUATED

Anyhow, I am fairly well situated just now. My government no longer includes anyone who is not second-rate.

GEORGE IV

Nothingness

This Royalty is certainly the very devil. . . . Sussex arrived on Wednesday between 3 and 4, himself in a very low barouche and pair, and a thundering coach

behind with four horses—his staff, Stevenson, a son of Albemarle's, a Gore, servants, groom of the chambers, a black valet-de-chambre and two footmen, clad en militaires. . . . It has been my good fortune during his stay here to be considered by all parties as his fittest companion. Accordingly, I had a tête-à-tête with him of nearly four hours together on Thursday, and of 2½ yesterday, and my health has really been greatly impaired by this calamity. He has every appearance of being a good-natured man, is very civil and obliging, never says anything that makes you think him foolish; but there is a nothingness in him that is to the last degree fatiguing.

CREEVEY, 1822

WELLINGTON

On Lord Liverpool

Lord Liverpool is on the side of the Opposition in all domestic questions. The majority of the Ministers follow him. On the other side, there are only the Chancellor and the Duke of Wellington. . . . The Duke of Wellington is absolutely furious. The other day, I saw him arriving from the House of Lords at a dinner-party which I attended, and heard him say, in front of about twenty people of all parties: 'My Lord Liverpool is neither more nor less than a common prostitute.' He was so angry that he forgot that he was speaking in front of women. He muttered a few words of apology; but, although everyone began to laugh, he remained serious, red and angry.

PRINCESS LIEVEN, 1823
Private Letters

DD 417

To a Washerwoman

London, September 1, 1848.

The Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Mrs. Herrick. His son, the Marquis of Douro, is a housekeeper in Belgrave Street. He is not responsible for the payment of his washing bills, even to the wife of a soldier. It appears to the Duke that the regular mode of proceeding would be to apply to the debtor himself, and, if payment should be refused or omitted, to enforce the same by all means sanctioned by law. This would be a regular mode of proceeding. That adopted is *impertinent*, in the real and not offensive meaning of that word.

To a Lady who sent a Box to Apsley House

WALMER CASTLE, 3rd November, 1849. Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Miss Jane Fyffe. He has this morning received in a deal box her letter of 3rd October. He has long been under the necessity of preventing his house being made the deposit of all the trash that is manufactured or made up. Giving money is one thing —receiving into his house all the trash made up is quite a different one! To the latter he will not submit. He invariably returns everything sent to his house without his previous permission, if he can discover the mode of doing so. But there is no direct communication between this place and Edinburgh. The deal case was brought down here from the Duke's house in London. the Duke is ignorant in what manner. He desires Miss — to inform him in what manner it is to be

¹ Householder.

returned to Edinburgh. He gives notice that if he does not receive an answer by return of post, the box and its contents will be thrown into the fire. He will not allow things to be sent to his house without his previous consent.

His Funeral Procession

November 19, 1852.—Yesterday saw the Duke of Wellington's funeral procession from Bath House secondfloor windows; a painful, miserable kind of thing to me and others of a serious turn of mind. The one true man of official men in England, or that I know of in Europe, concludes his long course. The military music sounded, and the tramp of feet and the roll of guns and coaches, to him inaudible for evermore. The regiment he first served in was there, various regiments or battalions, one soldier from every regiment of the British line; above 4,000 soldiers in all. Nothing else in the sumptuous procession was of the least dignity. The car or hearse, a monstrous bronze mass, which broke through the pavement in various places, its weight being seven or ten tons, was of all the objects I ever saw the abominably ugliest, or nearly so. An incoherent huddle of expensive palls, flags, sheets, and gilt emblems and cross poles, more like one of the street carts that hawk doormats than a bier for a hero. Disgust was general at this vile ne plus ultra of Cockneyism; but poor Wellington lay dead beneath it faring dumb to his long home. All people stood in deep silence and reverently took off their hats. In one of the Queen's carriages sat a man conspicuously reading the morning newspaper. Tennyson's verses are naught. Silence alone is respectable on such an occasion.

CARLYLE

BOOKSELLER'S BAGNIO

This most disgusting and indecent painting (The Redemption of Coventry by the Countess Godiva, by Joseph Reina) has been, and now is, exhibited by the reptile who purchased it, at his bagnio in the Opera Colonnade, and we need not tell our readers that the sole object in effecting this purchase has been to entice young men of fashion to see it, and by tampering their appetites with a lustful style, to induce them to purchase, at an exorbitant price, the engravings taken from it.

THE AGE, 1825

THE FIGHTING FITZGERALD

... Take a specimen of my lord's turn for story-telling.
... 'You have heard of Mr. Fitzgerald, who was called the Fighting Fitzgerald, whom I used to see a good deal of at Lord Westmorland's. There was a man who bet a wager he would insult him; so, going very near him in a coffee-house, he said—"I smell an Irishman!" to which the other replied—"You shall never smell another!" and, taking up a knife, cut off his nose.'

CREEVEY, 1827

ETTY'S NUDES

This painter has fallen into an egregious error. He mistakes the use of nudity in painting and presents

¹ J. J. Stockdale, publisher of Harriette Wilson's Memoirs and a vehement supporter of the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

in the most gross and literal manner the unhappy models of the Royal Academy for the exquisite idealities in which Titian and other masters who have chosen similar subjects, revelled. In this picture, and in another, No. 310, Phædria and Cymochles on the Idle Lake, Mr. Etty has permitted many unpardonable abominations. latter is a most disgusting thing, and we wonder that in these times the people who have the direction of this exhibition venture to permit such pictures to be hung. Phædria is the true representative of one of the Nymphs of Drury Lane, and Cymochles looks like an unwashed coal-porter. Such pictures are as shocking to good taste as they are offensive to common decency; they are only fit for the contemplation of very old or very young gentlemen, and ought to be reserved for the particular delectation of those classes of persons.

THE TIMES, 1835

We must indeed be more serious with this gentleman than is our wont, for the Society for the Suppression of Vice is not to be excused for its prosecutions in cases of obscene publications, and the Lord Mayor himself deserves at once to be sent to the treadmill for imprisoning a little Italian boy for hawking about the streets a naked cupid, if such lascivious scenes are allowed to be exhibited at the Royal Academy with impunity. A brothel on fire, which has driven all the Paphian nymphs out from their beds into the courtyard would be a modest exhibition compared to this, for they would at least exhibit en chemise. Several ladies we know were deterred from going into the corner of the room to see Leslie's, Webster's and other pictures of merit there, to

avoid the offence and disgrace Mr. Etty has conferred on that quarter.

THE OBSERVER, 1 1835

CONSTABLE AND THE SKETCHER

There is nothing here [Constable's The Valley Farm] to designate a valley or a farm, but something like a cow standing in some ditch-water. It is the poorest in composition, beggarly in parts, miserably painted, and without the least truth of colour—and so odd that it would appear to have been powdered over with the dredging box, or to have been under an accidental shower of white lead—which I find on enquiry is meant to represent the sparkling of dew. The sparkling of dew! Did ever Mr. Constable see anything like this in nature? If he has, he has seen what no one else ever pretended to have seen. Such conceited imbecility is distressing, and being so large, it is but magnified folly.

THE SKETCHER (Rev. John Eagles) in Blackwood's Magazine, 1835

Later: An Apology

It has been pointed out to me that in my critique of Mr. Constable's picture I used expressions that are too strong, and I regret having used them because they may

This writer said of a portrait of Harriet Martineau exhibited at the Royal Academy of the previous year: 'We never could understand why Monsieur Ude put a print of his head in front of his cookery book, except as a calf's head in a plate. This likeness of Miss Martineau would, if true in all its markings and expression, be far more intelligible as a frontispiece to her works—nothing she has written could so operate as "a check to population." 'He lost his job as art critic of the Morniug Chronicle for it. See Art in England, 1821–1837, by William T. Whitley.

be misconstrued. I know not Mr. Constable even by sight and have seen few of his pictures. I have seen some prints from his works which certainly gave me a high opinion of his ability, and 'conceit' or 'imbecility' are the last words I should apply when speaking of them. I was disappointed in his picture of *The Valley Farm* as in no way coming up to the expectation that those works of his which I had seen had raised in me.

THE SKETCHER

FALSE QUANTITY

Then I had very good fun at Sir Henry Halford's expense. You know he is the damnedest conceited fellow in the world, and prides himself above all upon his scholarship —upon being what you call an elegant scholar; so he would repeat to me a very long train of Greek verses; and, not content with that, he would give me a translation of them into Latin verses by himself. So when he had done, I said that, as to the first, my Greek was too far gone for me to form a judgment of them, but according to my own notion the Latin verses were very good. 'But,' said I, 'there is a much better judge than myself to appeal to,' pointing to Goodall, the Provost of Eton. 'Let us call him in.' So we did, and the puppy repeated his own production with more conceit than ever, till he reached the last line, when the old pedagogue reel'd back as if he had been shot, exclaiming: 'That word is long, and you have made it short!'-Halford turned absolutely scarlet at this detection of his false quantity. 'You ought to be whipped, Sir Henry,' said Goodall, 'you ought to be whipped for such a mistake.'

CREEVEY, 1833

WORSHIP OF WEALTH

The respect we pay to wealth absorbs the respect we should pay to genius. We may say truly, with a certain political economist, that we pay best 1st, those who destroy us—generals; 2nd, those who cheat us—politicians; 3rd, those who amuse us—singers and musicians; and least of all those who instruct us. . . . A literary man is forced to be proud of something else than talent—proud of fortune, of connexion, of birth . . . everyone knows the anecdote of the professor of chemistry who, eulogising Boyle, said: 'He was a great man; he was father of chemistry and brother to the Earl of Cork.'

BULWER LYTTON
England and the English, 1833

POSTSCRIPT TO THE ABOVE-

Bulwer I detest. He is the very pimple of the age's humbug.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

-AND YET ANOTHER

I went to visit my husband in his rooms, which he kept in order to have undisturbed communion with the Muse. I found the Muse in white satin seated on his knee.

ROSINA, wife of BULWER LYTTON

LADY HESTER STANHOPE

Your Majesty will allow me to say that few things are more disgraceful and inimical to royalty than giving commands without examining all their different bearings, and casting, without reason, an aspersion upon the integrity of any branch of a family who had faithfully served their country and the house of Hanover. . . . I shall not allow the pension given by your royal grandfather to be stopped by force, but I shall resign it for the payment of my debts, and with it the name of English subject, and the slavery that is at present annexed to it.

Letter to Queen Victoria

NOT A SYLLABLE

Yes, I have the greatest possible respect for him; but from his feeble voice, he always reminds me of a liberal blue-bottle fly. He gets his head down and his hand on your button, and pours into you an uninterrupted stream of Whiggism in a low buzz. I have known him intimately, and conversed constantly with him for the last thirty years, and give him credit for the most enlightened mind, and a genuine love of public virtue; but I can safely say that during that period I have never heard one single syllable he has uttered.

SYDNEY SMITH

¹ This was Palmerston's doing. Lady Hester Stanhope refusing to repay a debt of £1,000 to a Turkish money-lender, he drastically stopped her pension.

DEBAUCHERY AND DEATH

There has been, as far as I know, no example of undisguised debauchery exhibited to the world like that of Lord Hertford, and his age and infirmities rendered it at once the more remarkable and the more shocking. Between sixty and seventy years old, broken with various infirmities, and almost unintelligible from a paralysis of the tongue, he has been in the habit of travelling about with a company of prostitutes who formed his principal society, and by whom he was surrounded up to the moment of his death, generally picking them up from the dregs of that class, and changing them according to his fancy and caprice. Here he was to be seen driving about the town, and lifted by two footmen from his carriage into the brothel, and he never seems to have thought it necessary to throw the slightest veil over the habits he pursued. For some months or weeks past he lived at Dorchester House, and the Zichys with him: but every day at a certain hour his women, who were quartered elsewhere, arrived, passed the greater part of the day, and one or other of them all the night in his room. He found the presence of the Countess Zichy troublesome and embarrassing to his pleasure, and he made her comprehend that her absence would not be disagreeable to him, and accordingly she went away. He had then been ill in bed for many days, but as soon as she was gone, as if to celebrate his liberation by a jubilee, he got up and posted with his seraglio down to Richmond. No room was ready, no fire lit, nevertheless he chose to dine there amidst damp and cold, drank a quantity of champagne, came back chilled and exhausted, took to his bed, grew gradually worse, and in ten days he died.

GREVILLE, 1842

CARLYLE

On Keats

Milnes has written this year a book on Keats. This remark to make on it: 'An attempt to make us eat dead dog by exquisite currying and cooking.' Won't eat it. A truly unwise little book. The kind of man that Keats was gets ever more horrible to me. Force of hunger for pleasure of every kind, and want of all other force—that is a combination! Such a structure of soul, it would once have been very evident, was a chosen 'Vessel of Hell'; and truly, for ever there is justice in that feeling. At present we try to love and pity, and even worship, such a soul, and find the task rather easy, in our own souls there being enough of similarity. Away with it! There is perhaps no clearer evidence of our universal immorality and cowardly untruth than even in such sympathies.

1848

On Literary Men

Of all the deplorables and despicables of this city and time the saddest are the 'literary men'. Infandum! Infandum! It makes my heart sick and wae. Except Churchill, and perhaps chiefly because he liked me, I have hardly found a man of common sense or common honesty. They are the Devil's own vermin, whom the Devil in his good time will snare and successively eat. The creature—called again; the most insignificant haddock in nature—a dirty, greasy cockney apprentice, altogether empty, and non-extant except for one or two metaphysical quibbles (about every lawr of nature being an idear of the mind, &c.), and the completest

outfit of innocent blank self-conceit I ever in life chanced to witness. He is a blown bladder, wherein no substance is to be sought.

1831

On Jowett

I saw Jowett twice over, a poor little good-humoured owlet of a body, Oxford Liberal and very conscious of being so; not knowing right hand from left and otherwise. Ach Gott!

1859

POSTSCRIPT TO THE ABOVE

Carlyle: a man totally regardless of truth, totally without admiration of any active goodness, a self-contradictory man, who investigates facts with the most extraordinary care in order to prove his own preconceived notions....

All London is talking about the Reminiscences with well-deserved reprobation. It contains, however, a true picture of the man himself, with his independence, ruggedness and egotism, and the absolute disregard and indifference about everybody but himself. He was not a philosopher at all to my mind, for I do not think that he ever clearly thought out a subject for himself. His power of expression outran his real intelligence, and constantly determined his opinion; while talking about shams, he was himself the greatest of shams.

JOWETT

ENTHUSIAST

Mr. Croker is a man who would go a hundred miles through sleet and snow, on the top of a coach, in a December night, to search a parish register for the sake of showing that a man is illegitimate, or a woman older than she says she is.

MACAULAY

LEOPOLD TO QUEEN VICTORIA

LAEKEN, 13th January, 1854.

My Beloved Victoria,—I grieve to see how unjustly you are plagued, and how wonderfully untrue and passionate are the attacks of part of the Press. Abuse is somewhat the staff of life in England, everything, everybody is to be abused. . . . Many English superficial newspaper politicians imagine that threatening is the thing—I believe it is the worst of all systems. The Emperor Nicholas and Menschikoff wanted by threatening the Turks to get certain things, and they have by that means got a very troublesome and expensive affair on

With my best love to Albert. Believe me ever, my beloved Victoria, your truly devoted Uncle,

the same way....

their hands. I wish England too well to like to see it, but one of these days they will get into some scrape in

LEOPOLD R.

DISGUSTED READER OF 'MAUD'

Sir, I used to worship you, but now I hate you. I loathe

and detest you. You beast! So you've taken to imitating Longfellow. Yours in aversion. . . .

Letter to Tennyson

SNUBBED

Thackeray invited on one occasion Lord Broughton and Lord Stanley of Alderley to dinner. At dessert a bottle of wine, which he said was unique, went round: there was a glass left when it arrived at the top of the table. 'You shall have this, old boy,' he said, thumping Lord Broughton on the back. Lord Broughton drew himself up and said: 'I am not a boy, Sir, I hate to be called old, and damn your wine.'

ABRAHAM HAYWARD, 1882

BROWNING'S FERVOUR

Called for Mrs. Montagu, who is 'breaking up' they say; but her figure is erect and her bearing indomitable as ever,—'the noble lady' to the last! Browning came while I was there, and dropt on one knee and kissed her hand, with a fervour! And I have heard Browning speak slightingly of Mrs. Montagu. To my mind Browning is a considerable of a 'fluff of feathers', in spite of his cleverness, which is undeniable. He kissed my hand too with a fervour: and I wouldn't give sixpence for his regard for me.

JANE WELSH CARLYLE, 1856

PALMERSTON

An impostor, utterly exhausted, and at best only ginger beer, and not champagne, and now an old painted pantaloon, very deaf, very blind, and with false teeth, which would fall out of his mouth while speaking if he did not hesitate and halt so in his talk.

DISRAELI

Queen Victoria on His Death

Poor Lord Palmerston, alias Pilgerstein. . . . He had many valuable qualities, though many bad ones, and we had, God knows, terrible trouble with him about Foreign Affairs. . . . But I never liked him or could ever the least respect him, nor could I forget his conduct on certain occasions to my Angel. He was very vindictive and personal feelings influenced his political acts very much.

Letter to King Leopold

GLADSTONE

In Portland Place

4 Dec. 1880—Apropos of odious creatures, I saw Mr. Gladstone last week. He came out of Lord Selborne's house in Portland Place. He was looking dreadfully cross and very yellow. He seemed undecided as to where he should cross the street, and he stared at me in a helpless sort of way as if he expected me to offer him some advice on the matter; but, as there was no

possibility of putting him in the way of being run over, I refrained from giving an opinion. The crossings about Portland Place are so stupidly safe.

MISS SAVAGE Letter to Samuel Butler

His Favourite Sport

The Prime Minister is the greatest living master of the art of personal political advertisement. Holloway, Colman, and Horniman are nothing compared with him. Every act of his, whether it be for the purposes of health, or of recreation, or of religious devotion, is spread before the eyes of every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom on large and glaring placards. For the purposes of an autumn holiday a large transatlantic steamer is specially engaged, the Poet Laureate adorns the suite, and receives a peerage as his salary. . . . For the purposes of recreation he has selected the felling of trees, and we may usefully remark that his amusements, like his politics, are essentially destructive. Every afternoon the whole world is invited to assist at the crashing fall of some beech or elm or oak—the forest laments in order that Mr. Gladstone may perspire and full accounts of these proceedings are forwarded by special correspondents to every daily paper every recurring morning. . . . People used to say that Lord Beaconsfield was theatrical; but Lord Beaconsfield was a perfect child in this matter; he had not even mastered the rudiments of the art, and he never dreamt of such grand and theatrical representations as those with which Mr. Gladstone and his starring company

astonish the British public week by week. However, these remarks of mine are merely preliminary to a couple of concluding political observations to which I was led by two of the Gladstonian advertisements which appeared in the papers the other day. The first described the journey of a deputation of working-men from the pure and immaculate borough of Chester to Hawarden Castle. It has always appeared to me somewhat incongruous and inappropriate that the great chief of the Radical party should reside in a castle. But to proceed. One would have thought that the deputation would have been received in the house, in the study, in the drawing-room, or even in the dining-room. Not at all. That would have been out of harmony with the advertisement 'boom.' Another scene had been arranged. The working-men were guided through the ornamental grounds into the wide-spreading park, strewn with the wreckage and the ruins of the Prime Minister's sport. All around them lay the rotting trunks of once umbrageous trees; all around them, tossed by the winds, were boughs and bark and withered shoots. They come suddenly on the Prime Minister and Master Herbert, in scanty attire and profuse perspiration, engaged in the destruction of a gigantic oak, just giving its last dying groan. They are permitted to gaze and to worship and adore, and, having conducted themselves with exemplary propriety, are each of them presented with a few chips as a memorial of that memorable scene. Is not this, I thought to myself as I read the narrative, a perfect type and emblem of Mr. Gladstone's government of the Empire? The working classes of this county in 1880 sought Mr. Gladstone. He told them that he would give them and all other subjects of the Queen much legislation, great prosperity, and

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universal peace, and he has given them nothing but chips. Chips to the faithful allies in Afghanistan, chips to the trusting native races of South Africa, chips to the Egyptian fellah, chips to the British farmer, chips to the manufacturer and the artisan, chips to the agricultural labourer, chips to the House of Commons itself. . . .

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

Speech in 1884

SWINBURNE

On Whitmania

. . . But under the dirty clumsy paws of a harper whose plectrum is a muck-rake any tune will become a chaos of discords, though the motive of the tune should be the first principle of nature—the passion of man for woman or the passion of woman for man. And the unhealthily demonstrative and obtrusive animalism of the Whitmaniad is as unnatural, as incompatible with the wholesome instincts of human passion, as even the filthy and inhuman asceticism of SS. Macarius and Simeon Stylites. If anything can justify the serious and deliberate display of merely physical emotion in literature or in art, it must be one of two things: intense depth of feeling expressed with inspired perfection of simplicity, with divine sublimity of fascination, as by Sappho; or transcendent supremacy of actual and irresistible beauty in such revelation of naked nature as was possible to Titian. But Mr. Whitman's Eve is a drunken applewoman, indecently sprawling in the slush and garbage of the gutter amid the rotten refuse of her overturned fruit-stall: but Mr. Whitman's Venus is a Hottentot wench under the influence of cantharides and adulterated rum.

Studies in Prose and Poetry

Libidinous Laureate

It is no use to scold Mr. Swinburne for grovelling down among the nameless shameless abominations which inspire him with such frensied delight. They excite his imagination to its most vigorous efforts, they seem to him the themes most proper for poetic treatment. . . . And at all events he deserves credit for the audacious courage with which he has revealed to the world a mind all aflame with the feverish carnality of a schoolboy over the dirtiest passages in Lemprière. It is not every poet who would ask us all to go hear him tuning his lyre in a stye. . . . And no language is too strong to condemn the mixed vileness and childishness of depicting the spurious passion of a putrescent imagination, the unnamed lusts of sated wantons, as if they were the crown of character and their enjoyment the great glory of human life. Perhaps if Mr. Swinburne can a second and a third time find a respectable publisher willing to issue a volume of the same stamp, crammed with pieces which many a professional vendor of filthy prints might blush to sell if he only knew what they meant, English readers will gradually acquire a truly delightful familiarity with these unspeakable foulnesses. If he is not in his best mood he is in his worst—a mood of schoolboy lustfulness. The bottomless pit encompasses us on one side, and stews and bagnios on the other. He is either the vindictive and scornful apostle of a crushing ironshod despair, or else he is the libidinous laureate of a pack of satyrs.

JOHN MORLEY reviewing *Poems and Ballads*, 1866

On Emerson

Emerson had visited England soon after the publication of Poems and Ballads. In an interview with a journalist he was reported to have said things about the volume which gave deep offence to Swinburne. Swinburne wrote a mild protest, saying he felt sure that Emerson could not have used the words attributed to him. No reply was received. Swinburne was incensed. Some time afterwards Gosse and Swinburne were resting in the Green Park and the conversation turned on Emerson. Gosse learnt for the first time that Swinburne had again written to him. He said, 'I hope you said nothing rash.' 'Oh, no.' 'But what did you say?' 'I kept my temper, I preserved my equanimity.' 'Yes, but what did you say?' 'I called him,' replied Swinburne in his chanting voice, 'a wrinkled and toothless baboon who, first hoisted into notoriety on the shoulders of Carlyle, now spits and splutters on a filthier platform of his own finding and fouling.' The letter like its predecessor received no answer.

EVAN CHARTERIS
The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse

I arrived. In the middle of the drawing-room table was the new Fortnightly Review, wet from the press; in it an article on Méryon by Wedmore, and there was Wedmore,—the distinguished guest. I felt the excitement over the great man, and the great things he had been doing. Wedmore took the hostess in to dinner; I was on her other side, seeing things, bent on making the most of them. And I talked of critics, of Wedmore, as though I did not know who sat opposite. And I was nudged, my foot kicked under the table. But I talked. And whenever the conversation turned on Méryon, or Wedmore's article, or other serious things, I told another story, and I laughed ha ha !--and they couldn't help it, they all laughed with me, and Wedmore was forgotten, and I was the hero of the evening. And Wedmore has never forgiven me.

Really, it has been wonderful. I know you will enjoy it. It occurred to me in the morning—the Baronet's' sale to-day—h'm—the Butterfly should see how things are going! And I went home, and I changed my morning dress, my dandy straw hat, and then, very correct and elegant, I sauntered down King Street into Christie's. At the top of the stairway someone spoke to me. 'Well, you know, my dear friend,' I said, 'I do not know who you are, but you shall have the honour of taking me in.' And on his arm I walked into the big room. The auctioneer was crying, 'Going! Going! Thirty shillings! Going!' 'Ha ha!' I laughed—not loudly, not boister-

¹ Sir William Eden, who had brought an action against Whistler in the French courts. The Baronet and the Buttersty is Whistler's account of the affair.

ously; it was very delicately, very neatly done. But the room was electrified. Some of the henchmen were there; they grew rigid, afraid to move, afraid to glance my way out of the corners of their eyes. 'Twenty shillings! Going!' the auctioneer would cry. 'Ha ha!' I would laugh, and things went for nothing and the henchmen trembled. Louis Fagan came across the room to speak to me—Fagan, representing the British Museum, as it were, was quite the most distinguished man there. And now, having seen how things were, I took Fagan's arm. 'You,' I said, 'may have the honour of taking me out.'

WHISTLER

from the Life, by E. R. and J. Pennell

UNKNOWN CRITIC

The volume of unprinted criticism is immense, and its force amazing. Lunching last year at a chophouse, I was startled to hear a really important oath emerge from the lips of a clerkly-looking man who sat opposite me, and before whom the hurried waiter had placed a chump-chop. 'Take the thing away,' cried the man with the oath aforesaid, 'and bring me a loin-chop.' Then, observing the surprise I could not conceal that an occurrence so trifling should have evoked an expression so forcible, the man muttered half to himself and half to me: 'There is nothing I hate so much in the wide world as a chump-chop, unless indeed it be' (speaking slowly and thoughtfully) 'the poetry of Mr.——,' and here the fellow, unabashed, named right

out the name of a living poet who, in the horrid phrase of the second-hand booksellers, is 'much esteemed' by himself and some others. After this explosion of feeling the conversation between us became frankly literary, but I contrived to learn in the course of it that this chump-chop-hater was a clerk in an insurance office, and had never printed a line in his life. He was, as sufficiently appears, a whimsical fellow, full of strange oaths and stranger prejudice, but for criticism of contemporary authors—keen, searching, detached, genuine—it would be impossible to find his equal in the Press.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL
Men, Women and Books

GEORGE SAINTSBURY 1

Professor Saintsbury appears to be constitutionally incapable of distinguishing vulgarity and coarseness from liveliness and vigour. So far from having any pretension to the finer qualities of the critic, he seems to take a boisterous pride in exhibiting his grossness. If our review of this book² shall seem unduly harsh, we are sorry, but a more exasperating writer than Professor Saintsbury, with his indifference to all that should be dear to a scholar, the mingled coarseness, triviality and dogmatism of his tone, the audacious nonsense of his generalisations, and the offensive vulgarity of his diction

¹ Saintsbury, having been knocked down by a taxi, was very angry indeed with the driver. 'What! You ought to thank God for escaping with your life,' shouted the driver. 'I do thank God,' replied Saintsbury, 'but I damn you.'

² A Short History of English Literature.

and style—a very well of English defiled—we have never had the misfortune to meet with.

JOHN CHURTON COLLINS Ephemera Critica, 1901

PEDIGREE

Sir—In answer to your application re my parentage and age etc. My mother was a Buss horse, my father a Cab driver, my sister a Roughrider over the Arctic regions, my brothers were all gallant sailors on a steam-roller.

G. J. SMITH¹

HENRY JAMES

All through the quiet autumn and winter of 1906 he was busy preparing the collective and definite, but far from complete, edition of his novels and tales which began to appear some twelve months later. This involved a labour which some of his friends ventured to disapprove of, since it included a re-writing into his latest style of the early stories which possessed a charm in their unaffected immaturity. Henry James was conscious, I think, of the arguments which might be brought against this reckless revision, but he rejected them with violence. I was spending a day or two with him at Lamb House

^{1 &#}x27;Brides in the Bath' Smith, to the father of one of his victims.

when Roderick Hudson was undergoing, or rather had just undergone, the terrible trial; so the revised copy, darkened and swelled with MS. alterations, was put into my hands. I thought-I dare say I was quite mistaken—that the whole perspective of Henry James's work, the evidence of his development and evolution, his historical growth, were confused and belied by this wholesale tampering with the original text. Accordingly I exclaimed against such dribbling of new wine into the old bottles. This was after dinner, as we sat alone in the garden-room. All that Henry James-though I confess, with a darkened countenance—said at the time was, 'The only alternative would have been to put the vile thing'—that is to say the graceful tale of Roderick Hudson—'behind the fire and have done with it!' Then we passed to other subjects, and at length we parted for the night in unruffled cheerfulness. But what was my dismay, on reaching the breakfast-table next morning, to see my host sombre and taciturn with, gloom thrown across his frowning features like a veil. I inquired rather anxiously whether he had slept well. 'Slept!' he answered with dreary emphasis. 'Was I likely to sleep when my brain was tortured with all the cruel and—to put it plainly to you—monstrous insinuations which you had brought forward against my proper, my necessary, my absolutely inevitable corrections of the disgraceful and disreputable style of Roderick Hudson?' I withered, like a guilty thing, ashamed, before the eyes that glared at me over the coffee-pot, and I inly resolved that not one word of question should ever escape my lips on this subject again.

EDMUND GOSSE
Aspects and Impressions

Lord Curzon was not always able to cope with these interruptions in a spirit of philosophic detachment. There was an occasion [at the Lausanne Conference] when the French Delegation, headed by the superb Barrère, came in full force to discuss the Freedom of the Straits. Admiral Lacaze was designated to expound the naval aspects of the problem. In spite of his age, and the fact that he had once been Minister of Marine, the Admiral was so intimidated by Lord Curzon's imperturbable scrutiny that he reverted to the conventions and gestures of his early lycée. Being anxious to speak, he raised his hand and snapped his fingers, as is the habit in a French private school. Lord Curzon observed this snapping process with cold scrutiny: he ignored it: the Admiral snapped again, exclaiming the while, 'Je demande la parole'. Curzon gazed at him with disdain. He addressed the Admiral in a perfect Oxford accent. 'Je vous prie,' he said, 'de vous taire.' Admiral Lacaze winced at this discouraging remark and bolted from the room. Apologies were thereafter demanded. Sir Roger Keyes acted as mediator. He approached Lord Curzon and endeavoured to explain: he hesitated before that basilisk eye: he stopped: 'I am afraid,' he said, 'that I have lost the thread of my discourse.' Lord Curzon inclined his head majestically. Sir Roger Keves withdrew.

This incident is not without significance. It is the sort of incident which occurred again and again. If Curzon is to be understood at all, it must be pushed to its final conclusion. That conclusion was as follows. Sir Roger Keyes, having failed to extract an apology from Lord Curzon, appealed to one of the Foreign

Office officials whom he believed to possess a more confident attitude towards that intricate personality. The official, choosing a favourable moment, urged Lord Curzon to offer an apology to Admiral Lacaze. The Secretary of State was at first outraged by such impertinence. 'You ask me,' he said, 'to believe that Keyes, having, in circumstances of marked peril-and in inevitable danger to his life-confronted the massed batteries of the German Empire, is unable to formulate, in his own person, what I am quite prepared to suppose is a reasonable request?' The official replied that this was, in fact, the demand which he wished to impose upon Lord Curzon's powers of imagination. 'Never!' Curzon exclaimed, 'never, shall I apologize to that insufferable rabbit.' The rabbit in question was not Sir Roger Keyes but Admiral Lacaze. The Foreign Office official decided to turn on the vox humana. explained how painful it was for those of Lord Curzon's staff who admired him (Curzon at this was moved) to face the criticisms of those (Curzon at this was doubly moved) who regarded him as a hard man. Those who really knew him realised that he was a generous man, although one who loved rows. Other men, less generous than he, detested rows. It would be so easy for Curzon such a little thing—a thing so welcome to those who were fond of him. . . .

There was no more to be said. Already Lord Curzon's hand had reached towards the writing-pad. In a few seconds a letter of apology had been written such as would have melted a heart of stone.

HAROLD NICOLSON
Curzon: The Last Phase

The world learns how black is the monstrous heart of England and how holy is this war in which humanity is trying to free the world from the satanic clutches of Anglo-Jewish plutocracy, born in a ghetto closet from the embraces of Mephistopheles and a woman descended from Cain by the sinister light of a gold-coloured lamp. All the civet-cats on earth howled that night in the forests and the gardens, the wolves and the terrified dogs howled. In the dawn which followed, the first Rothschild in history clung to the breast of his mother like a young wolf and became drunk on her blood, sucking the life from her. Modern Judeocracy began its historical existence with the matricide of a nursing mother.

on the Rome Radio, June 6, 1941

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